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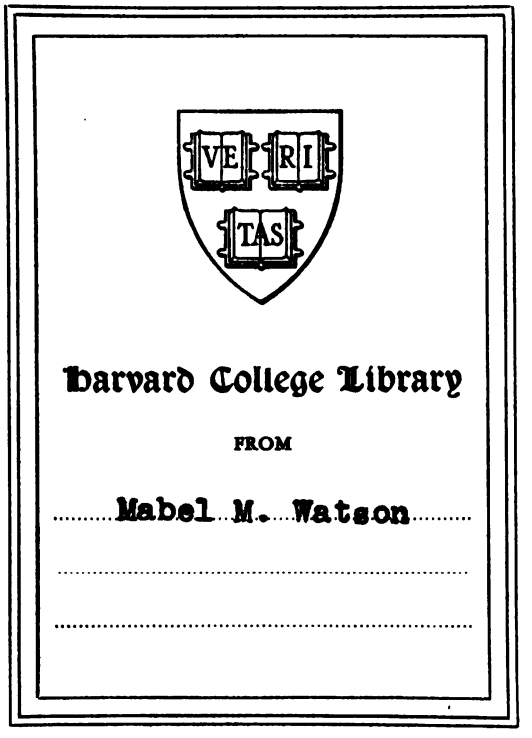

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MOSES AND ISRAEL.

INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMENTARY.

VOLUME THREE—JANUARY TO JULY, 1874.

SACRED TEXT OF THE LESSONS.

REVISED BY

PROF. MEAD, D.D., AND PROF. BLISS, D.D.

WITH NOTES PREPARED EXPRESSLY TO MEET THE WANTS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER, EMBRACING COMMENTARY, BIBLE DICTIONARY AND SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION.

BY

REV. FRANKLIN JOHNSON, D.D.,

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REVISER'S PREFACE.

THE revised translation of the passages of Scripture embraced in the following Lessons, aims to give the sense of the original as directly, and as exactly as possible, and in a manner as nearly analogous to that of the Hebrew as English idiom will allow. The author has endeavored scrupulously to observe the distinction between *translation* and *interpretation*, and has asked constantly, not What is the most agreeable, or even the clearest, expression, but What is most precisely adequate to the Hebrew; not What does the sacred writer probably mean, so much as What has he actually said. This idea will have been realized just in proportion as the common English reader shall be enabled to apprehend at once from these pages what a common Hebrew reader might have so apprehended from the original writings in the days, say, of Malachi,—the plain portions plainly, the figurative portions figuratively, those of doubtful signification doubtfully, and so the whole revelation of God's word and ways *just as* it was first given. Such is the high ideal! None know so well the difficulty of attaining to it as those who have most earnestly and patiently labored at the task. None can be more ready to offer than they to receive intelligent criticism which may help their work toward its more perfect accomplishment.

In the Lessons taken from the Book of Exodus, the reviser has had, besides the most important published versions and commentaries, the valuable assistance of notes on the translation of this Book, furnished for the American Bible Union, by Professor C. M. MEAD, of the Andover Theological Seminary. From the judgments expressed in those notes he has seldom been constrained to differ (although he has ventured upon changes not contemplated in them), and he has much to regret that the benefit of so much learning, discretion, and taste could not be had at a greater number of points and through the whole extent of his work.

GEO. R. BLISS.

UNIVERSITY AT LEWISBURG,
November 24, 1873.

PREFACE TO THE COMMENTARY.

THE notes of this volume have been prepared with special reference to the wants of Sabbath School teachers. These wants are threefold:

1. A commentary upon the lesson which shall furnish him with the results of the latest investigations. It should avoid those doubtful speculations with which the horizon of every age is filled, which constitute the vanguard of discovery, and which, having served their purpose of provoking discussion and research, disappear forever. But, on the other hand, it should reject no sound conclusion because it is recent. Whilst, therefore, it need not refute false theories, unless they have obtained such currency as to mislead the teacher, it should largely supply the materials of intelligent criticism, answering, so far as possible, every question which the most deligent study of the lesson can suggest, and stating not simply the conclusions of scholars, but the processes by which they have been reached. It must also furnish a minute criticism of the text, pausing to explain its grammatical connections, passing no word because it is small, and embracing thus a mass of elementary matter not found in commentaries addressed to the learned. It should so explain the text as to answer the objections of unbelievers; yet it should avoid a too polemic tone, lest it impress the teacher, and through him the class, with evil suggestions that would otherwise never enter the mind, and thus defeat the very purpose of its being.

2. A Bible Dictionary in which the persons and places mentioned in the lesson are discussed at length. The localities of the text should not merely be identified, but described. Dr. John Hall has recently called the attention of teachers to the interest which history derives from vivid descriptions of its scenes, and to the importance of rendering Scriptural history fascinating by enabling the pupil to see in fancy the places to which it conducts him. The author of a Sabbath School commentary should furnish the necessary assistance.

3. A book teaching the way of life. The object of Sabbath School teaching is not merely to reach the intellect and store the mind; it also aims to win the soul. Our most able instructors are more and more impressed with the importance of this work. Without it the teacher is like one who should perpetually lay the foundations of buildings and leave them to perish uncompleted. The illustration of the lesson to the intelligence of the pupil is but the beginning of his task; to touch the heart is the real object of his toil. But this part of his duty is not only most important; it is also most difficult. It requires very diligent study to derive from the lesson those practical inferences which can alone make its inculcation a spiritual benefit. The Sabbath School commentary should furnish the largest facilities for this exercise, so necessary and yet so often neglected, so delightful to the teacher who performs it, and so disheartening to many who feel at once its importance and their own neglect.

Such is the ideal which the author has proposed to himself. He is conscious of having fallen often far below it; yet he is not without the hope that his labors may

prove helpful to those for whom he has wrought. He has had at his command the admirable library of the American Bible Union, the Astor Library, the Boston Public Library, and the General Theological Library of Boston. The discussions of localities have been derived from the best and most recent sources; and in some instances the writer has been assisted by his own recollections of a brief Eastern journey in the spring of 1869. Great attention has been paid to the typical element of the Old Testament. Everything of a denominational character has been avoided. Every topic vitally related to the lesson, even though not directly suggested by its words, is fully treated. The historical links connecting the lessons are briefly sketched; and a connected life of Moses is thus supplied. The practical observations, designed as skeletons and hints of child-sermons, are given in great abundance, with the hope that, while no one teacher will be able to employ all those attached to any lesson, each will select such as are best adapted to the pupils committed to his charge, and seek to make them profitable by enlarging and illustrating, as practice will speedily enable him to do.

FRANKLIN JOHNSON.

116 SHERMAN AVENUE, NEWARK, N. J.,
December 1, 1873.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

THE larger number of the following lessons are selected from the Book of Exodus, which is so called because it is chiefly occupied with the departure of Israel from Egypt, and the events which immediately preceded and followed it: the name is derived from the Greek, and means *a going forth*. In Hebrew the book is named from the first words which occur in it: *And these are the names*. That it was written by Moses he himself affirms, Ex. 24 : 4; and our Lord recognized him as the author, Mark 12 : 26; Luke 20 : 37. As we pursue its study we shall often admire the minute accuracy of its allusions to the customs and institutions of Egypt and to the geography of the Sinaitic peninsula. This accuracy, which the researches of scholars and travellers have fully demonstrated, proves that the book was written by one who, like Moses, was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and was an eye-witness of the events which occurred in the wilderness.

EXODUS.

LESSON I.—The House of Bondage. Chap. 1 : 7–14.

The Duration of the Sojourn in Egypt.

We cannot determine with certainty how long the Israelites were residents of Egypt. The present Hebrew text of Ex. 12 : 40, 41, to which all modern versions are conformed, assures us that the period was precisely four hundred and thirty years. The Septuagint Version and the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, have another reading, according to which the four hundred and thirty years included the two hundred and fifteen years during which the three patriarchs sojourned in Canaan; and thus the sojourn in Egypt embraced a period of but two hundred and fifteen years. Paul, in Gal. 3 : 17, speaks of the period from the arrival of Abraham in Canaan to the giving of the law as including only four hundred and thirty years, a calculation which agrees with the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch in allowing only two hundred and fifteen years for the sojourn in Egypt, since, in the words of Hackett, "Isaac was born twenty-five years after the arrival in Palestine, was sixty years old at the birth of Jacob, and Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he went to reside in Egypt; 430−25+60 +130=215." Josephus wavers between the two computations; Ant. 2. 9. 1; De Bello Jud. 5. 9. 4; and Ant. 2. 15. 2. The genealogies of the Old Testament supply us with no certain grounds of argument on either side; see the next lesson, first note. The prophecy of Gen. 15 : 13–16, to which Stephen alludes in Acts 7 : 6, is decidedly in favor of the longer period; and the increase of the Israelites in Egypt seems to demand it. Such expositors as Rosenmüller, Hofman, Tiele, Ewald, Delitzsch, and Kurtz, advocate the longer period, while the current chronology of Usher adopts the shorter. There are several solutions of the difficulty: 1. Hackett: "One solution is that the four hundred and thirty years in Ex. 12 : 40 embrace the period from Abraham's immigration into Canaan until the departure out of Egypt, and that the sacred writers call this the period of sojourn or servitude in Egypt, from its leading characteristic. They could describe it in this manner with so much the more propriety, because, even during the rest of the time the condition of the patriarchs was that of exiles and wanderers." 2. The same writer thus states another solution: It is "that the Jews had two ways of reckoning this period, which were current at the same time; that it is uncertain which of them is the correct one, and for all practical purposes is wholly unimportant, since, when a speaker or writer, as in the case of Stephen, adopted this mode or that, he was understood not to propound a chronological opinion, but merely to employ a familiar designation for the sake of definiteness." 3. It is supposed that the reading of the Septuagint Version and the Samaritan manuscript is unauthorized, that Paul conforms to it because he was writing for Greeks who were acquainted only with the Septuagint, and because, since the question of chronology did not affect his argument, it would have been out of place to suggest its discussion. The question is one of great difficulty; but the writer is inclined to adopt the longer period, considering the great increase of the Israelites, the prophecy to Abraham, Gen. 15 : 13, and the explicit statement of Ex. 12 : 40, 41, the Hebrew text of which is held by nearly all scholars to be correct, notwithstanding the variations of the Septuagint and the Samaritan MS., variations probably made for a purpose.

If the sojourn in Egypt lasted only two hundred and fifteen years, the actual bondage probably endured but about one hundred years, for not only Joseph, but all the generation that came into Egypt with Jacob, ver. 6, some of whom were infants, were dead before its commencement. If, however, we adopt the longer term, the bondage embraced the greater part of it, perhaps three hundred and fifteen years. The latter hypothesis seems most probable from Gen. 15 : 13–16 and Acts 7 : 6, where the whole period is characterized by the bondage, as if that were its most marked feature.

The Influence of the Sojourn upon the Israelites.

The effects of the residence in Egypt have been investigated by Hengstenberg, Lengerke, and Kurtz. The results of these researches may be of interest. Had the Israelites remained in Palestine, it is probable that two unfortunate things would have happened: They would have intermarried with the people of the land, whose language and manners were nearly the same with their own; and indeed it was with great difficulty that they had been preserved thus far from such alliances, Gen. 24 : 1–3;

7 AND the sons of Israel were fruitful, and brought forth abundantly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

26 : 34, 35; 27 : 46; 34 : 1-4; 38 : 1-6. These intermarriages would have led, first, to the interfusion of the Israelites with the surrounding nations and their extinction as a separate people; and, second, to their contamination with the idolatry and wickedness for which their neighbors were infamous. Their removal to Egypt brought them into contact with a nation whose hatred made intermarriages difficult or impossible, and strengthened the feeling of separate nationality. It is true that the chosen people were infected with Egyptian heathenism, Ezek. 20 : 5-8; 23 : 3; Josh. 24 : 14; Lev. 17 : 7; Ex. 32; but had they been on terms of equality and amity with idolaters the effect would have been far more marked. The afflictions of Egypt had a corrective tendency, and induced them to call on God for deliverance, Ex. 3 : 7-9.

The residence in Egypt had also a vast influence upon the civilization of the Israelites. They came into Egypt as *nomads*, or shepherds, accustomed to tent life. They had lived in Palestine as pilgrims and strangers, rendering this manner of life necessary. They had engaged in agricultural pursuits to a limited extent, Gen. 26 : 12, showing their capacity for a settled life; and in Egypt they seem to have been gradually transformed from a shepherd family to a civilized people. The land of Goshen, embracing the garden ground of the Nile valley on the west, Ex. 2 : 3; Num. 11 : 5; Deut. 11 : 10, and the pasture land of the desert on the east, Ex. 13 : 17; 1 Chron. 7 : 21, was happily situated to assist the transformation. Its fertility is evident from Gen. 45 : 18; 47 : 6. The remunerative character of agriculture, in a country so exceedingly productive, must have led many to adopt it. The rapid multiplication of the people must have rendered the cultivation of the soil necessary to the sustenance of life. The contempt of the Egyptians for shepherds doubtless also contributed to wean the Israelites from their nomadic life. The agriculture of Egypt was so artificial as to involve a knowledge of many arts; and the tributary service to which the people were subjected, was a means of instruction in many others. This change is recognized in the Scriptures. Nothing is said of tent life in Egypt; the chosen people lived in houses and cities and even in royal cities, Ex. 12. They cultivated fishing and gardening, Num. 11 : 5, and watered the soil in an artificial manner for the sake of the crops, Deut. 11 : 10. Having become accustomed to the comforts of civilization, they were doubly sensible of the privations to which they were exposed in the desert, Num. 11 : 5.

The erection of the tabernacle presupposes an intimate acquaintance with architecture, with weaving with the methods of working in both the common and precious metals, with the cutting and setting of precious stones, and with many other pursuits of advanced civilization. The arts thus learned were not forgotten, 1 Chron. 4 : 14, 21, 23. This change in the habits of the Israelites was followed by a partial cessation of the abhorrence in which they had been held by the Egyptians, so that the two mingled with more intimacy, Ex. 3 : 22; 12 : 4-7. We must except from these remarks, however, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh, who, probably in consequence of having occupied the eastern pasture-grounds of Goshen, still continued their shepherd life. Num. 32 : 1-4. The influence of the residence in Egypt upon the forms of worship among the Jews is considered under Ex. 40 : 17-30.

7. **Sons.** Instead of *children*, as in the Common Version. The original always has *sons of Israel*: in conformity with the feeling everywhere prevalent in antiquity, the nation was designated with reference to its male members.

Of Israel. Israel was the name given to Jacob after he had wrestled with the angel at Peniel, Gen. 2 : 28. CONANT. "Meaning, *one who strives with God*, and by implication *has power with him*." The signification *a Prince of God*, suggested by Jerome, and inserted in the margin of the Common Version, is based upon an erroneous interpretation of Gen. 32 : 28: see the Revised Genesis. The name of Israel was most appropriately given to the twelve tribes collectively; for 1. They could not have been called *the children of Abraham*, as that name would have included the Ishmaelites, and the descendants of Abraham's later wives, Gen. 21 : 18; 25 : 1-6, and of Esau; nor *the children of Isaac*, for that name would have included the descendants of Esau, Gen. 35 : 28, 29; 36 : 1-43. 2. The character of Israel was stamped on his descendants; they exhibited at once the hardihood, the worldly sagacity, and the piety of him from whom they derived their name. Hence his history of mingled sorrow and joy was a prototype of theirs. The character of neither Abraham nor Isaac was thus mirrored in the Israelites. 3. The name of Israel expressed for the nation the special honor which it expressed for the individual on whom it was first conferred, the honor of prevalence with God in prayer.

The national name came to be used in the time of Saul, in a narrower sense, 1 Sam. 11 : 8; 2 Sam. 20 : 1; 1 K. 12 : 16; and on the division of the nation it was applied, almost exclusively, to the northern kingdom; for a few exceptions see 2 Chron. 11 : 3; 12 : 6. About the time of the restoration from

8 Then arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not

the Babylonish captivity, it was sometimes used to designate the masses of the people as distinguished from priests, Levites, and rulers, Ezra 6: 16; 9: 1; 10: 25; Neh. 11: 3. It was afterwards applied, as at first, to all the descendants of Jacob, though the name of *Jews* was more common.

Fruitful. The original word is borrowed from the vegetable kingdom, as in Gen. 1: 11, 12, 22, 28; the rapidity of the increase was like that of fields where a hundredfold is gathered.

Bred abundantly. Literally *swarmed*, a word borrowed from the animal world, Gen. 1: 20. The increase of the Israelites was like the rapid increase of fish. Comp. Ex. 1: 5 with Num. 1: 46. If the Israelites sojourned in Egypt only two hundred and fifteen years, they must have doubled in each term of fifteen years. If, however, as is most probable, they were in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, they doubled in each term of thirty years.

Multiplied. This threefold repetition of the idea is designed to make it emphatic. The increase of the Israelites was beyond all precedent, and almost beyond the meaning of ordinary language.

The rapid multiplication of the Israelites in Egypt had been the subject of particular prophecy, Gen. 46: 3, and of many more general prophecies, Gen. 12: 2; 13: 16; 15: 5; 22: 17; 26: 4; 28: 14; 32: 12. The bondage of Israel also was predicted, Gen. 15: 13. For several generations the chosen people increased but slowly. Sarah had but one son; Rebekah had but two, only one of whom was selected to inherit the promises; and the immediate family of Jacob, the offspring of two wives and two concubines, was not exceptionally large. The rate of increase was larger, however, with each generation, until, in Egypt, it became marvellous. The rapid increase of the Israelites began, thus, before the subjection of the people to bondage, and was, in fact, the occasion of that subjection, vers. 9–11. It ceased, however, about the time of the Exodus, Acts 7: 17, 18; comp. Num. 1: 46 and Num. 26: 51. It was owing to the special blessing of God upon natural agencies. The following circumstances probably tended to produce it: 1. The Israelites led a pastoral and healthful life. 2. MURPHY: "They had scope and verge in a thinly-peopled country; and they were placed in the best of the land, Gen. 57: 11." 3. They were comparatively free from moral impurities. 4. Marriage was essential to the dignity and social standing of the Israelite, as it is to this day; so that but few remained single. 5. Marriage was contracted at a very early age; the climate stimulated the development of both mind and body; the girl of twelve and the boy of thirteen were marriageable, and the usual age of marriage was probably from sixteen to eighteen. 6. The blessing of offspring was highly valued, as it is still in the East; the wife was esteemed in proportion to the number of her children; and childlessness was regarded as the greatest calamity; Gen. 16: 2; 29: 31; 30: 1, 14; Deut. 7: 14; 1 Sam. 1: 6; 2: 5; 4: 20; 2 Sam. 6: 23; 18: 18; 2 K. 4: 14; Isai. 47: 9; Jer. 20: 15; Hos. 9: 14; Esth. 5: 11; Ps. 127: 3, 5; Eccl. 6: 3. 7. The climate of Egypt was famous in antiquity for its efficacy in promoting prosperous births. 8. Canon COOK, speaking of modern Egypt: "In no province does the population increase so rapidly as in that occupied by the Israelites."

Became exceedingly mighty. The result of their numbers. This was before their subjection to bondage. We know but little of the ways in which the might of the Israelites was manifested; but in 1 Chron. 7: 21–24 we have a hint of warfare between the tribe of Ephraim and some of the inhabitants of Palestine, in which the former seems to have met with ultimate success. In 1 Chron. 4: 22 we read that the descendants of Judah gained dominion in Moab during this period. These military enterprises of the Israelites may have been dictated by an eager desire to hasten the fulfilment of the divine covenant concerning the possession of the promised land. The fact that an Israelite married a daughter of the Egyptian monarch, is another indication of the distinction which the chosen people had attained, 1 Chron. 4: 18.

The land. Of Egypt.

Was filled with them. They overflowed the boundaries of Goshen, and were found in all parts of Egypt. That the Israelites were intermingled with the Egyptians is evident from ch. 3: 22. The hardihood, the ingenuity, and the industry characteristic of their race, would lead them into every path of enterprise, and make them influential.

8. **A new king.** Manetho, who is supposed to have been chief of the priests in Heliopolis, the ancient On, Gen. 41: 45, and to have written under the patronage of King Ptolemy Philadelphus, B. C. 304, aided by documents found in the Egyptian temples, records the invasion and conquest of Egypt by an Eastern nation called Hyksos, or shepherd kings, who were expelled after an uninterrupted reign of five hundred and eleven years. The original work of Manetho is lost; but interesting fragments of it are preserved by Josephus. The general statements of Manetho are remarkably confirmed by the recent discoveries of Egyptologers. All scholars now accept his testimony that Egypt was once occupied by a powerful Asiatic people. It is impossible to determine the exact era of the Hyksos; but Manetho places their expulsion a brief period before the Exodus, which he mentions with many fabulous and absurd particulars. He even makes them assist the children of Israel in their escape. Hence,

9 Joseph. And he said to his people: Behold, the people

V. 9. *Him;* the people are personified, and spoken of as an individual through this and the two following verses.

most Biblical critics agree that the Hyksos dynasty occupied the throne during the life of Joseph, and that the "new king" of the text was one of the native dynasty by which they were succeeded. This theory is incidentally confirmed by the sacred records: 1. The friendship with which Abraham was received in Egypt, Gen. 12: 10-20, and on which Isaac must have presumed when he contemplated a visit to the same country, Gen. 26: 2, was far different from the feeling of abhorrence with which the native Egyptians regarded all shepherds, Gen. 46: 34. 2. We can best account for the favor shown by Pharaoh to Joseph and his kindred, Gen. 41: 28-57; 45: 16-22; 47: 1-12, on the supposition that the shepherd life was not disgraceful in the estimation of the monarch, and that he acknowledged some community of race and language with the Israelites. 3. The brethren of Joseph were instructed to avow their occupation to Pharaoh, as a ground of favor, Gen. 46: 31-34, which would be inexplicable if the monarch shared the aversion of his Egyptian subjects to the shepherd life, but which was the highest wisdom if he was himself the descendant of a race of Asiatic shepherds. 4. When Jacob died, the whole court and the Elders of Egypt formed a funeral procession, with chariots and horsemen; which is inexplicable, if they regarded him, as did the Egyptians, as an unclean shepherd chief. 5. According to 1 Chron. 4: 18, one of Pharaoh's daughters was married to an Israelite, which shows that the reigning house did not regard the shepherd nation with the aversion which was cherished by the Egyptians. 6. Potiphar is termed emphatically "the Egyptian," Gen. 39: 2, 5, as if it were a noteworthy circumstance that a native Egyptian should be captain of Pharaoh's life-guard. 7. The "new king," Ex. 1: 8, if he was a native prince, would naturally mistrust the Israelites; he would regard them as the allies of the Hyksos, whose return he would probably dread. Canon COOK: "The expressions of this verse are peculiar and emphatic. 'A new king' is a phrase not found elsewhere. It is understood by most commentators to imply that he did not succeed his predecessor in natural order of descent and inheritance. He 'arose up over Egypt,' occupying the land, as it would seem, on different terms from the king whose place he took, either by usurpation or conquest. The fact that he knew not Joseph implies a complete separation from the traditions of Lower Egypt." The same writer identifies the "new king" with Amosis I., the head of the 18th dynasty: "He was the descendant of the old Theban sovereigns; but his family resided for many years at Eleithyia, El Kab, south of Thebes, and was tributary to the dynasty of the Shepherds, the Hyksos of Manetho, then ruling in the north of Egypt. Amosis married an Ethiopian princess, Nephertari, and, in the third year of his reign, captured Avaris, or Zoan, the capital of the Hyksos, and completed the expulsion of that race."

Egypt. The country occupying the northeastern angle of Africa, and irrigated by the Nile. The English name is probably of Grecian origin. The most usual Hebrew name is *Mitzraim*, or *Land of Mitzraim*. In form *Mitzraim* is a dual noun; and it is generally joined with a plural verb. The dual form probably has reference to the natural division of the country into the upper and lower regions, the narrow valley of the upper Nile forming the first, and the Delta the second. Egypt has always been regarded as consisting of these two parts; it is so described on the monuments; the royal crown was divided, as a symbol of the territorial division, one part being white, and rising above the other, to represent the upper district, the other being red, and lower, to represent lower Egypt; and the sovereign had a special title as the ruler of each region, that of "king" over upper Egypt, and that of "bee" over lower Egypt, the initial hieroglyphic of the former name being a bent reed, 2 K. 18: 21; Isai. 36: 6; Ezek. 29: 6. This division of the country was not merely geographical; it rested on the difference of religion, language, and customs of the two populations. The meaning of the Hebrew name is in doubt. The singular form. *Matzor*, occurs in Isai. 19: 6; it is analogous to the Arabic name of Egypt, *Misr*, which means both *limit* or *border*, and *red mud*. The Hebrew name seems to have been essentially the same with that which was used throughout Asia in slightly varying forms. WHITNEY: "That *Mazr* was in Asia generally the name of Egypt, is now evident from the cuneiform inscriptions. In the Persian it was *Mudrâya*, or *Mudaráya;* in the Median, *Mutzariga;* in the Babylonian, *Misir;* in the Assyrian, *Musri*." Egypt is also called in the Bible "Rahab," *the proud, the insolent*, Ps. 87: 4; and "the land of Ham," Ps. 105: 23, 27; comp. Ps. 78: 51, with reference to the people by whom it was settled. The ancient Egyptian name was *Kem*, probably the equivalent of *Ham*, the land taking its name from the son of Noah by whose descendants it was peopled, Gen. 10: 6. The Egyptians were red or dark, holding a place midway between the white and the black races. They early attained a very high civilization, many of whose monuments, protected by an almost rainless climate, are still preserved. Their land was extremely productive, fertilized by the annual overflow of the Nile, and irrigated by artificial appliances. The present inhabitants are a mixture of the ancient stock with the Nubians and the Arabs; and they live in great degradation.

of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.
10 Come, let us deal wisely with him, lest he multiply, and it

After the Exodus the relations between Egypt and Israel were usually of a friendly character. Shishak, 1 K. 14: 25; 2 Chron. 12: 2-9; Pharaoh Necho, 2 K. 23: 29-35; Jer. 46: 2, and Zerah, 2 Chron. 14: 9, if indeed the last was an Egyptian, which is doubtful, were the only kings hostile to the chosen people. J. P. THOMPSON: "One Pharaoh gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon, 1 K. 3: 1; 7: 8; another appears to have been the ally of Jehoram, king of Israel, 2 K. 7: 6; So made a treaty with Hoshea, 2 K. 17: 4; Tirhakah aided Hezekiah, 2 K. 19: 9; Pharaoh Necho fought Josiah against his will, 2 K. 23: 29, and did not treat Judah with the severity of the oriental kings, 2 K. 23: 33-35; and his second successor, Pharaoh Hophra, maintained the alliance, notwithstanding this break, as firmly as before, Jer. chs. 37-44, and although he failed in his endeavor to save Jerusalem from the Chaldeans, he received the fugitives of Judah, who, like the fugitives of Israel at the capture of Samaria, took refuge in Egypt." The Israelites were also forbidden to cherish malevolent feelings toward the Egyptians, who were placed, indeed, in the list of the most favored nations, Deut. 23: 7, 8, while a very different spirit was manifested towards certain other peoples, Deut. 23: 3-6. These amicable relations were due in part to the gratitude of Israel for the kindness of Egypt under the shepherd dynasty, and in part to the fact that the military route of the Egyptian armies to the East lay north of Palestine, so that the two nations were seldom brought into armed contact. The friendship of Egypt was at times a misfortune to the chosen people, leading them into idolatry, Isai. 30: 2; 31: 1; 36: 6; Ezek. 17: 15; 29: 6.

The allusions to Egypt in the Scriptures are frequent. The following list is from WHITNEY'S Handbook of Bible Geography: "Boundaries, Josh. 15: 4; 2 K. 24: 7; Isai. 27: 12; Ezek. 29: 10. Towns and districts, Ezek. 30: 13-18. Irrigation, Deut. 11: 10. Fertility and products, Gen. 13: 10; Num. 11: 5; Josh. 19: 5-9. Commerce, Gen. 37: 25, 36; 1 K. 10: 28, 29; Ezek. 27: 7. Armies, Ex. 14: 7; Isai. 31: 1. Magicians, Gen. 41: 8; Ex. 7: 11; 1 K. 4: 30; Acts 7: 22. Priests, Gen. 41: 45; 47: 42. The king's property in the land, Gen. 47: 18-26. Embalming, Gen. 50: 3. Refusal to eat with Hebrews, Gen. 43: 32. Prophecies concerning Egypt, Gen. 15: 13, 14; Isai. 19; 20: 2-6; 45: 14; Jer. 9: 25, 26; 43: 8-13; 44: 30; 46; Ezek. 29-32; Joel 3: 19; Zech. 10: 11. Other interesting allusions, Ps. 78: 12; 81: 5; Zech. 10: 10; Heb. 8: 9; Jude 5; Haggai 2: 5; Heb. 3: 16."

Knew not Joseph. *To know not* means in Scripture language, not only *to be ignorant of*, but also *to disregard*. This Pharaoh was probably somewhat acquainted with the public life of Joseph; but regarding him as having belonged to a hostile dominion, he would not favor the chosen people on his account. Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten, Gen. 50: 22; and the generation following had passed away, ver. 6, marking, perhaps, the lapse of another century. A new dynasty was in power. The name of Joseph was, therefore, almost forgotten. For the history of Joseph see Gen. 30: 23, 24; 33: 2; chs. 37, 39-50; Ps. 105: 17, 18.

9. **The people.** MURPHY: "They are now recognized as no longer a family, but a community."

More and mightier. From these words some have inferred that Egypt was now divided into a number of petty territories, over one of which the king of the text reigned. Manetho, however, expressly states that, on the expulsion of the Hyksos, the native dynasty regained control of both Upper and Lower Egypt; and the monuments confirm the statement. But, during the five centuries of their power, the shepherd kings had doubtless given a great portion of the land to their own kindred, as in the case of the Israelites, displacing and weakening the Egyptians. See Ex. 12: 38. The new king would find his race in Lower Egypt both few and poor. Forcible deportations and importations of peoples were customary features of ancient warfare and political policy.

10. **Wisely.** The plan adopted by the king was, humanly speaking, eminently wise. But judged from a higher and better point of view, it was foolish. Wrong is always folly. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," 1 Cor. 3: 19.

Lest he multiply. The great effort of Pharaoh was to check the multiplication of the children of Israel; for this purpose he enjoined two measures, the enslavement of the people, and the destruction of their male infants by the midwives and his Egyptian subjects, vers. 8-22. He did not contemplate the total extinction of the males, but a great reduction of their numbers, and such degradation as would deprive them of political ideas. The females would be harmless, and would prove valuable slaves. A similar policy was pursued by the Lacedæmonians towards the Helots, by Mithridates towards his Roman subjects, and by the Caliph Hakem towards the Egyptians: see Hävernick, Introduction to the Pentateuch, I. 241. Stephen says that Pharaoh dealt "subtly," cunningly, concealing the real object of his policy. That object was to render the life of the Israelite so bitter that he should cast out his infants to die, seeking thus to save them from the wretched fate of their parents, Acts 7: 19, Revised New Testament. His purpose was frustrated, ver. 12.

come to pass, when a war befalls, that he also join with those who hate us, and fight against us, and go up out of
11 the land. And they placed over him task-masters, in order to afflict him with their burdens; and he built store-

When a war befalls. The new dynasty would naturally anticipate some attempt of the expelled shepherd kings to return, and would take every means to prepare for the contingency, and to maintain itself.

Join with those who hate us. The former friendship of the Hyksos and Israelites, their community of occupation, and possibly, also, their community of race and language, made the two peoples natural allies. Manetho says that the former were driven eastward; and the Israelites occupied the eastern frontier of Egypt, where the Hyksos could easily form a junction with them. The eastern border of Egypt was always vulnerable; and her most powerful enemies were the rising eastern nations, with whom Israel could claim kinship. Manetho, as quoted by Josephus, says that even the Hyksos felt obliged to strongly fortify the eastern border of Egypt, to secure themselves against the Assyrians; already Assyria was a rival power. The tribes of the desert made incursions, as the monuments record, which were repulsed with difficulty. But just established on the throne, the king had reason for his apprehensions.

Fight against us, and go up out of the land. He was apprehensive of two misfortunes: first, that the Israelites would aid the foe in the warfare; and second, that they would forsake Egypt. He was aware of their desire to settle in Palestine; for of this they made no secret; see Gen. 49: 29–32; 50: 6–11, 24, 25; and on ver. 7, sixth paragraph. He understood that they were anxiously awaiting an opportunity favorable for their departure. He anticipated that they would aid an invading army on condition that the invader should assist them in their plans of conquest. But why did he fear their departure? Why did he not rather hasten it? 1. They were his most prosperous and wealthy subjects; if they departed, their riches departed with them, thus diminishing his revenues. But by subjecting them to slavery, he secured their wealth to the government. 2. Their departure would have left the eastern province of Egypt utterly desolate, and hence incapable of sustaining an army of defence. As a base of supplies in warfare, it was invaluable. 3. The government wanted the labor of the Israelites, vers. 11–14. These are the reasons which probably determined the policy of the king, which was to render the chosen people not only harmless in war, but valuable alike in war and in peace.

Go up. Palestine was a mountainous country, while Egypt was low. Hence travellers "went up" from Egypt to Palestine, Gen. 50: 6, and "went down" from Palestine to Egypt, Gen. 46: 3.

11. **Taskmasters.** Superintendents of public works. They were men of rank, and had under them subordinate overseers. They are frequently represented on the Egyptian monuments. They were employed by all ancient governments; and the Egyptians, whose pyramids and other immense buildings were the product of slave labor, had special use for them. HENGSTENBERG: "Sesostris placed upon all his buildings erected by captives, an inscription showing that no native citizens had been engaged in this servile employment." Amosis I., the probable king of the text, had special occasion for serf laborers, as he restored the temples and other buildings destroyed by the Shepherds.

Store-cities. A phrase used several times in the Old Testament. According to 2 Chron. 32: 28, the store-cities of antiquity were for the productions of the soil. It is questioned whether the provisions thus stored up were designed to be exported, or were for the sustenance of travellers and their beasts, or were kept for times of famine, or were prepared for warlike operations; and whether, if for the last purpose, the depositories were fortified. C. M. MEAD: "The conjecture that the store-cities had a military object is favored by the position of Pithom and Raamses, and of Hamath, 1 K. 9: 19; 2 Chron. 8: 4, and by the mention of the building of store-cities in connection with that of fortresses, as illustrating Jehoshaphat's greatness, 2 Chron. 17: 12."

Pithom. The name means *house*, or temple, *of Tum*, the sun-god, worshipped chiefly at Heliopolis. Herodotus mentions an Arabian town called Patumos, near the eastern bank of the Nile, and on the ancient canal of the Red Sea. Most critics identify this town with the Pithom of the text: the similarity of the two names and the situation of Patumos in or near the land of Goshen render the identification probable.

Raamses. This was probably in the same border-land, but farther east. Many identify it with Heroöpolis, whose site is also doubtful. See Gen. 47: 11; Ex. 12: 37. Canon COOK: "Both cities were situated on the canal, which had been dug or enlarged long before, under Osertasen, of the 12th dynasty. The names of both are found on Egyptian monuments: the former is known to have existed under the 18th dynasty."

12 cities for Pharaoh, Pithom, and Raamses. And even as
they afflicted him so he multiplied, and so he spread
abroad: and they shuddered before the sons of Israel.
13 And the Egyptians made the sons of Israel serve with
14 rigor. And they made their lives bitter through hard
service in clay, in bricks, and in all service in the field,

V. 12. *Shuddered;* thus the verb, which expresses mingled disgust, fear, and perplexity, may be uniformly rendered in Num. 22 : 3; Is. 7 : 16, the only passages in which it occurs with the same construction as here.

These magazine cities on the frontier were well situated for military purposes of either a defensive or an offensive nature.

12. **And even as they afflicted him, so he multiplied, and so he spread abroad.** The effect of their cruelties was the exact reverse of their anticipations. Experience shows that excessive toil may unfavorably affect the quality but not the number of offspring. The working classes are not diminished by toil, especially where food is abundant, as it seems to have been with the Israelites, Ex. 16 : 3, Num. 11 : 4-6. Thus the cruel purpose of the government was thwarted by the very measures which were taken to promote it.

They shuddered. See the marginal note of Dr. BLISS above. The effort to diminish the numbers of the Israelites had proved a signal, terrifying, and mortifying failure.

13. **With rigor.** The expression of disappointment, hatred, and apprehension.

14. **They made their lives bitter through hard service.** The bitterness of this service became a national memory; ch. 2 : 23; 6 : 9; Num. 20 : 15; Acts 7 : 19, 34.

In clay. The clay was used as mortar for building, as it is with us, for pottery, and for brick. The Egyptians have still in use wheels for grinding chalk, or lime, or clay, which closely resemble those which we use for the same purposes.

In bricks. Bricks were the most common of building materials. They were sometimes burned in the kiln; but usually they were merely dried in the sun. Many of these sun-dried bricks, stamped with the names of ancient kings, are as firm to-day as when first put up. H. W. PHILLOTT: "The usual dimensions vary from twenty inches to fourteen and a half inches long; eight and three quarter inches to six and a half inches wide; and seven inches to four and a half inches thick. When made of the Nile mud they required, as they still require, straw to prevent their cracking; but those formed of clay taken from the torrent-beds on the edge of the deserts, held together without straw. The baked bricks were smaller than the sun-dried. Among the paintings of Thebes, one on the tomb of Reksbara, an officer of the court of Thothmes III., about 1400 B.C., represents the enforced labors in brick-making of captives, who are distinguished from natives by the color in which they are drawn. Watching over the laborers are 'task-masters,' who, armed with sticks, are receiving the 'tale of bricks' and urging on the work. The process of digging out the clay, of moulding, and of arranging, are all duly represented; and though the laborers cannot be determined to be Jews, yet the similarity of employment illustrates the Bible history in a remarkable degree." HENGSTENBERG: "It is said in the narrative that the Israelites were subjected to severe labor in mortar and brick. Just so, this servile labor appears throughout the painting as twofold: some are employed upon the clay from which the bricks were made, and some upon the finished brick." Immense masses of brick are now found in Goshen, possibly the product of Israelitish labor. The Jews never forgot the art of brick-making; 2 Sam. 12 : 31; Isai. 65 : 3.

All service in the field. MURPHY: "Agriculture was attended with considerable labor in the higher grounds of Egypt, on account of the necessity of watering them by artificial means." The expression "all service," indicates that the Israelites performed not merely agricultural labor, but other tasks, such as the digging of canals and the construction of highways and reservoirs. There is every reason to decide that they were not employed on the pyramids, which were built long before.

All their service, etc. A repetition to make the record of the bitter bondage more emphatic.

The afflictions of Egypt were sent as a means of weaning the Israelites from their adopted country and preparing them to undertake the difficult march through the wilderness, and the conquest of Palestine; but they were also sent as a discipline. The chosen people had fallen into idolatry, Ex. 20 : 5-8; 23 : 3; Josh. 24 : 14; Lev. 17 : 7; Ex. 32, and their afflictions turned them again to Jehovah, Ex. 2 : 23-25, and were the means of securing his favor.

with all their service which they made them perform with rigor.

LESSON II.—THE BIRTH OF MOSES. CHAP. 2 : 1–10.

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Those whom God loves shall prosper even in this life, vers. 7, 12.

2. The brevity of earthly fame, ver. 8. In a century the fame of Joseph as a statesman had faded away. The fame of his piety has, however, endured to this day. The only enduring honors are those which God confers.

3. All wrong is foolish, though it may seem wise to wicked men, ver. 10.

4. The wisdom of wrong-doers often leads to the very results they most earnestly seek to avoid, ver. 10. The wicked means which Pharaoh employed to keep the Israelites in his power led to their rapid multiplication, ver. 12, and to their speedy independence.

5. All statesmanship which departs from the path of justice is both criminal and foolish, vers. 10–14. Political sins are as great as any others.

6. The purpose of God cannot be thwarted, though all the powers of earth combine against it, vers. 8–12.

7. The people of God shall multiply and fill the earth, in spite of all opposition, vers. 8–12. They are even now increasing with marvellous rapidity.

8. The people of God may suffer adversities; but their afflictions wean them from the earth and prepare them for heaven, as the persecutions of the Israelites prepared them to depart from Egypt into the promised land, vers. 11–14.

9. Our afflictions are sent as a discipline to rebuke us for sin and lead us near to God, vers. 7–14.

10. National sins bring national judgments, vers. 1–14.

11. The suffering of God's people may be profound and inexplicable; but there is a divine reason for it which they shall hereafter know, vers. 9–14.

12. All things work together for good to those who love God, ver. 12.

13. The children of God, even in their greatest weakness and discouragement, are a vexation and terror to the wicked, ver. 12.

14. All impenitent souls are destined to bitter disappointment, if not here, certainly hereafter, ver. 12.

1. **A man.** Amram, Ex. 6 : 18, 20; Num. 3 : 19; 26 : 59; 1 Chron. 6 : 2, 3, 18; 23 : 12, 13; 24 : 20. The name means *people of the Exalted*, i. e., *of the Most High*. Amram is popularly supposed to have been the grandson of Levi, through Kohath, Gen. 46 : 11. Those who accept this supposition, limit the sojourn in Egypt to two hundred and fifteen years. Those who hold that the sojourn in Egypt embraced the longer term of four hundred and thirty years, suppose that the Amram of the text was a later descendant of Levi, named for the grandson. The latter supposition is supported by the statements of Num. 3 : 27, 28. The Kohathites are there divided into four families, of which the descendants of Amram, the grandson of Levi, occupy the first position. The four families numbered eight thousand six hundred males, and there would be as many women and girls, making seventeen thousand two hundred descendants. As there were but four families, we must assign one-fourth of these, or four thousand three hundred persons, to the Amramites. Of course the father of Moses could not have had such a multitude of descendants at a time when Moses himself was but eighty years of age. Therefore Amram the grandson of Levi must have been earlier than Amram the father of Moses. The genealogies, which at first glance seem to identify the two, Ex. 6 : 18, 20; Num. 26 : 58, 59; 1 Chron. 6 : 2, 3; 23 : 12, 13, may omit several links, as do several others, comp. Ex. 6 : 14–25 with 1 Chron. 6 : 1–25; Ezek. 7 : 3 with 1 Chron. 5 : 33–35; and Matt. 1 : 8, 11 with 1 Chron. 3 : 11, 12; 2 K. 24 : 6. The genealogical tables of the Israelites were often designed to mark chains of succession, rather than all the particular links in the chains; and the four members which usually appear in the genealogies of Moses may be intended to represent the four generations who dwelt in Egypt; they were selected, perhaps, with reference to Gen. 15 : 16. A similar artificial construction of genealogical tables occurs in Matt. 1 : 17.

House. Household. The Israelites are not yet organized in tribes; the tribe is in its incipient state. Afterwards the people were divided into *tribes*, the tribes into what we may term *clans*, the

2 daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bore a
son: and she saw that he was fair, and she hid him three
3 months. And she could not longer hide him, and she took

clans into *households*, and the households into *individual men* with their wives and children, or families in the most limited sense. Num. 1 : 20–43; 5 : 18, 20, 22, 24, 26; Josh. 7 : 14, 17, 18.

Levi. Levi was the third son of Jacob by his wife Leah. The name, which means *a joining*, expressed the hope of the mother that the affections of her husband would be drawn to her by the birth of three sons, Gen. 29 : 34. The most conspicuous deed of Levi's life was the bloody revenge which he obtained for the dishonor of his sister, Gen. 34 : 1. The act was one of falsehood, of treachery, and of cruel murder. It began in a solemn lie to the men of Shechem. For the crime of one man it exacted the destruction of a whole city. It was followed by self-satisfaction rather than repentance, Gen. 34 : 31. Levi appears to have shared the hatred of his brothers towards Joseph, and to have joined in the plots against him, Gen. 37 : 4. For this crime he was punished and disciplined with the other partners in it, Gen. chs. 42–44. He afterwards removed to Egypt with the people of his father, Gen. 46 : 11. The last scene in which his name appears, recalls the crime against the men of Shechem; for this his descendants are to be scattered among the happier tribes, Gen. 49 : 7; Josh. 21 : 1–42. The curse was literally fulfilled; but it was mercifully mitigated with elements of blessing. From Levi sprang the priestly family of Aaron; and though the priesthood was confined to this family, the whole tribe partook somewhat of the priestly dignity, and became prominent as the clerical tribe.

A daughter of Levi. Jochebed. Canon COOK: "Her name means *the glory of Jehovah*, one clear instance of the usage of the sacred name before the Exodus." The words *son* and *daughter* are frequently used in the Scriptures in the sense of *descendant*, Judg. 11 : 40; 2 Sam. 1 : 24; Ps. 48 : 11; 97 : 8; 1 Pet. 3 : 6, and such is probably the meaning here. In Num. 26 : 59 the Common Version calls Jochebed a "daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bore to Levi in Egypt." The words "her mother" are in italics, showing that they were supplied by the translators. The expression is literally "whom she bore;" for the sentence has no subject, and the verb is in the feminine gender. The ungrammatical character of the sentence perhaps indicates that some words have been lost; and the passage thus supplies no evidence that Jochebed was the immediate daughter of Levi, from whom she was probably removed several generations. See above, the note on Amram.

2. **Bore a son.** He was not her first-born; Miriam, vers. 4, 7, and Aaron, Ex. 7 : 7; Num. 26 : 59; 33 : 39, were older. The writer confines his attention to the events that led to the Exodus; hence he omits to notice the birth of the elder children, which had but an indirect bearing upon his subject.

Fair. The word corresponds to that of Acts 7 : 20. This is the only notice in the Pentateuch of the beauty of Moses; and it is introduced here because it is necessary to explain the motive of the mother in her extraordinary efforts to preserve the child. The modesty of the writer, Num. 12 : 3, prevented anything more than a single allusion to the subject. Much stress was laid upon it later. The phrase of Stephen, Acts 7 : 20, is literally "fair before God," the strongest expression possible. The beauty of the child is noticed in Heb. 11 : 23, Revised New Testament, where the interest of the father in its preservation is also observed. Similar allusions are found in Josephus and Philo. It was the extraordinary beauty of the babe that induced the parents to use unusual precautions for its preservation from the Egyptians, who had been commanded to destroy the male children of the Israelites, Ex. 1 : 23. It is probable that the cruel edict had been issued but recently; for Aaron, who was but three years older than Moses, Ex. 7 : 7, was preserved, and it would probably be executed with great ardor at first.

Hid him. Canon COOK: "Jochebed probably did not call in a midwife. At present all travellers state that midwives are very seldom employed by Egyptian women, never by the common people, and by women of station only in cases of peculiar difficulty. She was of course cautious not to show herself to Egyptians. The hiding of the child is spoken of as an act of faith, see Heb. 11 : 23. It was done in the belief that God would watch over the child."

3. **She could no longer hide him.** We are not acquainted with the special circumstances which made longer concealment impossible. It is evident from the narrative, however, that the residence of Amram was near the royal court, in whose precincts the cruel edict of Pharaoh would be obeyed more zealously than elsewhere. The cries of the babe had probably attracted the attention of the suspicious Egyptians; a search was perhaps threatened; and some means of preserving the child must be taken immediately. The stratagem of Jochebed was desperate; but it was the only one possible under the circumstances.

She took. She did not make the ark; she took an article already at hand. Her task was to prepare it with slime and pitch.

for him an ark of reeds, and pitched it with asphalt and with bitumen, and placed the child in it, and placed it
4 among the rushes on the bank of the river. And his sister took her stand afar off, to know what would be done to him.

Ark. The original word is used only in the Pentateuch; and it is confined to the ark of Noah and that of Moses. It is probably borrowed from the Egyptian language, where it is common in the senses of *chest*, *coffer*, and *cradle*. The ark of Moses was probably not a boat; it may have been the cradle of the babe, or some article of household utility, like a chest or large basket.

Reeds. The original word probably designates the papyrus reed. The fact that this was used by the Egyptians for light and swift boats, Job 9 : 26, Revised Version; Isai. 18 : 2, may have suggested to Jochebed the employment of a chest or cradle constructed of it. Canon Cook: "It is a strong rush, like the bamboo, about the thickness of a finger, not quite cylindrical, but three-cornered." Its usual height is from three to six feet; but sometimes it is found fifteen feet high. It is destitute of leaves; and the minute flowers on their thread-like branchlets form a bushy crown at the extremity of the stem. It is represented with great accuracy on the most ancient monuments of Egypt. At present it does not occur on the Nile below Nubia, but anciently its extension was much greater. It grows in Palestine, in a small stream near Jaffa, in Lake Genesereth, and in Lake Merom. It is found in Sicily and in Lake Thrasimene, Italy. The lower part of the reed was boiled for food by the ancient Egyptians. The interior of the stalk, after the rind was removed, was used to make a kind of paper. It was cut into very thin slices, in the direction of its length; these were laid on a flat board side by side and covered with a sort of glue, and other slices were laid over them at right angles; when the whole was subjected to pressure and dried, the process was complete. Many ancient Egyptian records have been preserved to the present time on this material. Sails, sandals, cordage, and numerous other articles were also made of papyrus.

With asphalt and with bitumen. Both the original words seem to refer to mineral pitch, the first to the substance in its hard state, the second to the same substance in its liquid state. The liquid bitumen, an opaque and inflammable substance, exudes or boils from the earth in certain localities, and is afterwards hardened by exposure to the air, and becomes exceedingly brittle. Before the hard asphalt was used it was therefore mixed with the liquid bitumen. The Arabs now mix it with the tar of wood for the same purpose. THOMPSON: "The mineral as found in this country melts readily enough by itself; but then when cold it is as brittle as glass. It must be mixed with tar while melting, and in that way forms a hard, glossy wax, perfectly impervious to water." The use of asphalt was an antediluvian art, Gen. 6 : 14. Strabo says that in Babylonia boats were constructed of wicker-work and then covered with bitumen to exclude the water. Wilkinson has shown that it was used in ancient Egypt for the same purpose. It was also used in Babylon to cement the bricks employed in building, particularly in the foundations and substructures, where the ill-effects of water were feared, Gen. 11 : 3. The springs of Is, from which the Babylonians obtained their bitumen, are still in existence. It is remarkable that Babylon, the only place where the Bible speaks of asphalt being used in building operations, is the only place where it is found in the ancient ruins; Layard assures us that it was not employed in the structures of Nineveh, though it could be obtained in abundance near by. The Arabians originally obtained their bitumen from the vale of Siddim, at the southern end of the Dead Sea, Gen. 14 : 10; but the slime-pits there were subsequently covered by the submergence of the plain, Gen. 14 : 3. The submerged springs continued, however, to throw up immense masses of bitumen, which, hardened by the water, floated on the surface, and were gathered by the Israelites and the neighboring people; hence the classic name of the Dead Sea, *Lacus Asphaltites*. Small pieces may even yet be gathered on the shores. The asphalt of the Dead Sea was specially prized for its purple hue.

Rushes. The Egyptian word *suf* was used for a particular species of papyrus; and the Hebrew word of the text, *suph*, is doubtless derived from it. The Hebrew word, however, is used in the Old Testament in the general sense of rank grasses and weeds; and such is probably its meaning here, though possibly it should be understood in the more restricted Egyptian sense. The Egyptian *suf* was not so large as the species from which the ark of Moses was constructed. It was used for food, and its roots were employed for fuel.

On the bank of the river. Literally, *on the lip of the river*. The ark probably rested on the ground in the edge of the water, as if it had drifted to its place. There would be no occasion to pitch it if it was not to be placed where it would seem to have been exposed to the water. Jochebed doubtless placed it at the spot where she knew the princess was accustomed to bathe. She seems also to

5 And Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to
bathe, and her maids were walking on the side of the
river; and she saw the ark in the midst of the rushes, and
6 sent her hand-maid and took it. And she opened it, and

have deposited it just before the customary hour for the princess to perform her ablutions. Her trepidation, and the care she employed to avoid detection, are left to our imagination.

4. **His sister.** Miriam; Ex. 15:20; Num. 12:1-15; 20:1; 26:59; Mic. 6:4. The first of the name mentioned in the Bible. Through the mother of Jesus, the name, in the form of Mary, has become the most frequent in Christendom. It means *their rebellion*. The first appearance of Miriam in the text presents her as a girl of remarkable tact. In Num. 12:1, she is placed before Aaron, as the elder; and the high position given her by her superiority of age she seems ever to have maintained. She was a prophetess, Ex. 15:20. Micah reckons her as one of the three deliverers of Israel, Mic. 6:1. She was the leader in the complaint against Moses for his marriage with a Cushite woman; for which she was temporarily punished till brought to repentance, Num. 12:1-15. The esteem in which she was held is evident from the sympathy of the nation during her period of discipline, Num. 12:10-5. She died at Kadesh near the termination of the desert wanderings, Num. 20:1. She shared largely the genius for which her family were remarkable, and she left a profound impression upon the minds of her people. Josephus says that the Israelites mourned for her thirty days, as afterwards for her brothers. He makes her the wife of Hur, and the grandmother of the famous architect Bazaleel. Jerome says that in his day her tomb was shown near Petra.

Took her stand. Doubtless instructed by her mother. The whole stratagem would naturally be arranged with careful forethought.

5. **Pharaoh's daughter.** Josephus calls her Thermuthis; Syncellus, Eusebius and the Rabbins call her variously Pharia, Merris and Bithia. But all these names are merely conjectural. Canon COOK: "It is important to observe that the Egyptian princesses held a very high and almost independent position under the ancient and middle empire, with a separate household and numerous officials. This was especially the case with the daughters of the first sovereigns of the eighteenth dynasty: in two instances, at least, they were regents, or co-regents with their brothers.

"The facts recorded in these verses, according to M. Quatremere, suggest a satisfactory answer as to the residence of the daughter of Pharaoh, and of the family of Moses. It must have been in the immediate neighborhood of the Nile, and therefore not at On or Heliopolis; it must have been near a branch of the Nile not infested by crocodiles, or the child would not have been exposed, nor would the princess have bathed there: therefore not near Memphis. These and other considerations, agreeing with the traditions recorded by Eutychius, point to Zoan, Tanis, now San, the ancient Avaris, on the Tanitic branch of the river, near the sea, where crocodiles are never found, which was probably the western boundary of the district occupied by the Israelites. Avaris was captured by Amosis, and was the most suitable place for the headquarters of the Pharaohs, both as commanding the districts liable to incursions from Asiatic nomads, and as well adapted for carrying out the measures for crushing the Israelites. The field of Zoan was always associated by the Hebrews with the marvels which preceded the Exodus. See Ps. 78:43."

To bathe. The women of Egypt are now kept jealously secluded in harems, and it is not customary for them to bathe in the Nile. But Wilkinson has shown that the women of ancient Egypt were quite unrestrained and had liberty to associate with men, as women in Christian countries now do. He has also shown that bathing in the river was a common practice with them; and he gives from the monuments a representation of an Egyptian bathing scene, a lady with four servants who attend upon her to assist. The custom had its origin in the superstition that the waters of the Nile were an emanation from Osiris, and possessed a power of special value to the childless. The superstition of their exceptional virtue still pervades Egypt. Jochebed had doubtless carefully considered the habits and the character of Pharaoh's daughter before resorting to her expedient for the preservation of her babe.

Were walking on the side of the river. While the princess bathed. Hence the discovery of the ark was not made by them, but by the princess herself, a providential circumstance, as it led her to a personal interest in the babe.

Her hand-maid. JAMIESON: "Her immediate attendant. The term is different from that rendered *maidens*."

6. **She opened it.** It was, therefore, closed. The part which the princess performed in person is carefully distinguished from that which was done by others, that her compassion may the more readily be accounted for.

saw the child, and behold, a boy, weeping! And she had compassion on him, and said: He is of the children of the
7 Hebrews. And his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter: Shall I go and call to thee a nursing woman of the He-
8 brews, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her: Go. And the maiden went
9 and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her: Take away this child and nurse him for me,

And saw the child. Bending over the ark, and lifting its lid with eager curiosity, she is startled and moved by the discovery which she makes.

Behold. The original word marks the surprise and interest excited by the discovery.

A boy. The original specifies the sex in order to explain the feeling of the princess; boys were specially valued in antiquity, and probably she would not have taken a deep interest in a girl.

Weeping. Another providential circumstance, adapted to touch the heart of the princess.

She had compassion on him. Many circumstances may have tended to produce it, as, for example, the beauty of the babe, her personal agency in its discovery, and its own touching cries. It is possible also that the princess bathed in the Nile, as did other wives, with the yearning desire for offspring; and if so, she was prepared to rescue and adopt a male child thus strangely cast upon her pity. She knew his peril. Her compassion is mentioned in order to account for her breach of her father's command, Ex. 1: 22. The Egyptians regarded compassion to the unfortunate as a condition of happiness beyond the grave; in their funeral ritual the soul of the just is represented as standing before the Judge and saying: "I have not afflicted any man, I have not made any man weep, I have not withheld milk from the mouths of sucklings."

He is of the children of the Hebrews. These are words of compassion for one of a race with whose miseries she may have been touched. The complexion of the Israelites was very different from that of the dark Egyptians; the Jews of the East are far lighter in complexion than those of Europe; they are, in fact, quite blonde. The princess would therefore determine the parentage of the babe at a glance. She thinks that she comprehends the whole affair; the ark, she supposes, is the last expedient of a despairing mother to cast on Providence the care of the babe which the law dooms to death. The words presented the opportunity which Miriam desired; overhearing them, the quick-witted sister came immediately forward with the proposition of the next verse.

7. **His sister said.** She is swift to seise the proper opportunity. The emergency makes her bold.

A nursing woman of the Hebrews. The proposition probably relieved the princess of great perplexity, as an Egyptian nurse would perhaps have rendered unwilling service for a Hebrew child, or possibly might have been induced to destroy it secretly in obedience to the royal decree. It may be, also, that the extraordinary hardihood of the Israelitish women made their employment as nurses customary with the Egyptian ladies. The princess probably had not determined what to do, but was still in a state of indecision, when the words of Miriam came to her aid and suggested her course.

That she may nurse the child for thee? Observe the delicate skill with which the sister suggests that the princess shall make the babe her own. Perhaps the ultimate adoption of the child was aided by this subtle suggestion.

8. **Go.** The curt answer of a princess to one of a despised people.

The maiden. The original word is used for a marriageable young woman; but women were marriageable at twelve.

Went and called the child's mother. With what thankful joy they beheld the accomplishment of their plan! They suppressed their gladness, however, for the child must seem to be an unknown and unowned foundling.

9. **Pharaoh's daughter said.** Observe the commanding style of her address, natural to one in her station.

Take away this child. We are not informed whither it was taken; but possibly to the mother's own home. It was probably not convenient for Pharaoh's daughter to display a Hebrew child openly in the palace. But, placed under her protection elsewhere, it would be safe.

Nurse him for me. An almost literal repetition of the words which Miriam had uttered, showing that the princess caught the suggestion of her course from the sister.

and I will give thy wages. And the woman took the child
10 and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought
him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And

10. **She brought him to Pharaoh's daughter.** Probably when the persecutions of the Egyptians had abated. The words may be designed to describe the custom of the nurse: when the princess desired the presence of the child it was brought to her. Thus her interest in it grew until she formally adopted it as her own. MURPHY: "It is probable that the exterminating edict was with drawn soon after the birth of Moses. The caprice and passion of a despot might hastily issue such a decree. But after-thoughts would soon suggest the folly of cutting off this useful horde of serfs in a single generation. The debasement of the feelings by forced labor, which would render them more serviceable as slaves and less formidable as rebels, is a much more satisfactory measure to an arbitrary government. Moreover, the natural feelings of humanity revolt against the indiscriminate and continued murder of male infants. The measure would be unpopular with his subjects, and with the members of his own family as soon as Moses appeared there, and would therefore soon be abandoned. Accordingly, we hear no more of it." The example and influence of the princess probably also tended to secure its abandonment.

He became her son. She did not at first formally adopt him; but now she does so. It is rendered probable by this statement that she was childless; if she had been a mother she would scarcely have ranked a Hebrew boy with her own children. As the son of the princess, Moses was brought up as one of the royal family, and, as Stephen says, "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," Acts 7: 22. Manetho says that he was a priest; and the statement is probably true; the king belonged to the priesthood; the priests were the depositaries of Egyptian learning, and the statement of Stephen places Moses among the most learned class. He was thus providentially prepared for the great work of his life. Stephen adds that he was "mighty in word and deed," justifying, perhaps, the tradition preserved by Josephus, that he was engaged in a campaign against the Ethiopians in which he distinguished himself. But Moses is utterly silent concerning this period of his history, because his purpose was to write not of himself, but of God's dealings with the people of Israel. As a royal prince he had the most splendid opportunity for distinction and pleasure and riches; but he abandoned it for the cause of God and his people, Heb. 11: 24-26. Canon COOK: "Moses probably passed the early years of his life in Lower Egypt, where the princess resided; all the notices in this book indicate a thorough familiarity with that portion of the country, and scarcely refer to the Thebaid." The same writer has a valuable excursus in the Speaker's Commentary on the education of Moses, from which we quote the most material portions:

"The education which would be given to a youth belonging to the royal household, and destined for military or civil service under the Middle Empire, has lately been illustrated by the labors of Goodwin, Chabas, and other Egyptologers, from the select papyri published in 1844 by the trustees of the British Museum. These documents belong for the most part to the reigns of Rameses II. and his immediate successors; but the literary habits and attainments which they describe, are known to have been far more ancient. M. Maspero has lately collected the most important facts.

"He observes that we know for certain that a literary education was the first condition for admission to the public service; the title of scribe was necessary in order to obtain the lowest appointment in the civil administration or in the army. Hence a real enthusiasm for study is manifested by men of letters, such as Enna and Pentaour, whose compositions, indeed whose autographs, are preserved.

"The education, so highly valued, began at a tender age; the infant, when it was weaned, was sent to school, and there instructed by scribes officially appointed. The discipline was severe, but due care was taken for the child's maintenance: the mother brought his food daily from his home, and in the upper schools rations of bread and salt fish seem to have been supplied regularly by the government: the register of distribution being, as in our colleges, accepted as proof of the scholar's attendance.

"The scholar learned the elements of letters, the rules of orthography and grammar; and as he advanced, the art of expressing his thoughts in simple and perspicuous prose; or in the epistolary style adapted for official communications, which occupy a large portion of the papyri; or in poetical composition, in which extant examples show a genuine feeling for art, resembling Hebrew poetry in the carefully balanced parallelisms and skilful combination of antitheses, though differing from it as markedly in the absence of the essential characteristics of simplicity and grace. It was, indeed, no slight thing to master the qualifications of a man of letters. The mere art of writing presented difficulties so serious, that we find scribes boasting of a thorough knowledge of the mysteries of sacred letters as a rare and wonderful attainment. According to Diodorus, special pains were bestowed upon arithmetic and geometry, an assertion borne out by late inquiries, which show that the system

she called his name Moses, and said: Because I drew him out of the water.

of notation was remarkably clear, and that exact accounts were kept in every large household; a treatise on Geometry in the British Museum now engages the attention of scholars, and will probably be published by Mr. Birch. The mystic writings, in which ancient truths were imbedded in dark and dreary superstitions, occupied much of the time, not only of the priests, but of all men of learning. Schools of interpretation existed at an age long before Moses, which have left abundant traces in various readings, glosses, and mystic explanations of the so-called Funeral Ritual or Book of the Dead, a work which the literal translation of Mr. Birch, remarkable for learning and ingenuity, has made to some extent accessible to English readers. The earliest extant copy of the chapter (the seventeenth) which gives the deepest insight into the ancient theosophy of Egypt, dates from the eleventh dynasty, and has, even in that form, numerous glosses bearing witness to a remote antiquity. In an address to an officer of rank, whose adventures in Syria have been illustrated by Goodwin and Chabas, the scribe whose autograph is before us, says, 'Thou art a scribe skilful above thy equals, learned in the sacred writings, chastened in heart, disciplined in tongue; thy words pierce me; one phrase has thrice gone forth; thou hast broken me with terror.' In a work just published, M. Lauth attempts to identify this personage, so remarkable for talents, learning, and bold speculations on religion, with Moses the Hebrew; an identification not likely to approve itself to scholars, but which serves to show the course of thought, and, to some extent, the state of mental development in Egypt at a time not far remote from that in which Moses became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in word and deed." The education of Moses in Hebrew, and his intense feeling of nationality, followed as a matter of course from his intimacy with his mother, whose remarkable strength of character is manifest from the lesson.

Moses. The name is generally admitted to be Egyptian, as naturally it would be, used by an Egyptian princess. If its mother had already named the child, the princess could not know it; to her he was a motherless and nameless foundling. The etymological meaning of the name is, *brought forth*, and then *son*, with reference to the birth of a child. The princess made an agreeable play upon the word; in adopting the child as "her son," she gave him a name which told at once the story of his deliverance from the water, *drawn forth*, and his adoption into the royal family, *son*. Her son was hers by a real birth; for she had brought him forth, though from the water. The name is not uncommon in the Egyptian papyri. Its Egyptian differs slightly from its Hebrew form; and it is possible that the Hebrew word, like many others, was derived from the Egyptian, and thus existed in both languages.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Man's extremity is God's opportunity, ver. 3.

2. God overrules the opposition of his foes so that it contributes to the advancement of his cause and the deliverance of those whom he loves. The cruel edict of Pharaoh, Ex. 1 : 22, was the means of securing to Moses such an education as fitted him to be the leader and liberator of the oppressed Israelites, vers. 2–10.

3. God's providence is exhibited in little circumstances not less than in great: the fact that the princess, and not her maids found the ark, the weeping of the babe, the form of speech adopted by the sister, all contributed to form the decision by which Moses became a royal child, vers. 5, 6, 7, 9.

4. God's purposes cannot be frustrated by the enmity of even the most mighty, vers. 2–10.

5. The frailest vessel is safe when God has a purpose in its preservation, ver. 3.

6. Moses in the ark, and Christ asleep in the ship amidst the storm, vers. 3, 4. The Church is always safe.

7. God often uses his foes in such a way as to secure his own glory and the welfare of his people, vers. 5–10. If you do not glorify him willingly, you must glorify him against your will, with no prospect of his blessing in return.

8. God works by human agencies, vers. 2–10; not that he needs our help, but in order to develop in us those virtues which he loves, and to honor us as co-workers with him here and as co-heirs with his Son hereafter.

9. A little girl may by one speech change the history of the world, ver. 7.

10. When circumstances seem most adverse to the will of God we should not despair, but by prayer, by ingenuity, by labor, do what we can to assure a favorable result, vers. 3–9.

11. The inestimable value of a babe's life. Properly trained, the weakest child may grow, by God's grace, into one of God's chosen heroes, vers. 2–10.

12. If the earthly life of a babe is thus valuable, how precious is its soul, which contains such capacities for good, vers. 2–10.

LESSON III.—THE CALL OF MOSES. CHAP. 3 : 1–10.

1 AND Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, a priest of Midian; and he led the flock behind the

13. All our gifts of natural beauty and attractiveness come from God, ver. 2; and they should be humbly used for his glory, rather than for the gratification of natural vanity.

14. The unregenerate heart has many praiseworthy traits, such as the compassion of ver. 6. But since it does not love God and refuses to obey him, these cannot save it.

15. Truth is stranger than fiction, vers. 2–10.

The events which intervene between this lesson and the preceding require a brief notice. The princess was probably dead, as Syncellus states, when, at the end of forty years, Acts 7 : 23, Moses visited his people. It is evident from Ex. 2 : 11 that she had not tried to conceal from him his origin, or that, if she had sought to do so, the effort had been in vain; his mother, at least, would have informed him. He was not accustomed, however, to associate with the Israelites, Acts 7 : 23; his position and occupations as a prince would prevent such associations; and we know not what circumstances turned his attention to their distress in his forty-first year, Acts 7 : 23. But we are assured that he already looked upon himself as their destined deliverer, arguing, perhaps, from the singular providences of his life, and his position of influence and power, Acts 7 : 25. He was already willing to abandon everything for them, Heb. 11 : 24–26. The slaughter of the Egyptian task-master which followed, Ex. 2 : 11, 12, is not to be justified as strictly right; but neither is it to be classed as a murder. MURPHY: "In a time and place where the wild will and the high hand have the rule, he that lifts the hand not for selfish ends, but for the defence of the weak, is not to be lightly condemned. He has much of the spirit of the magistrate, where the law and its administrator are wanting." The punishment which the task-master was inflicting must have been one of terrible severity, such as we now know that the Egyptian overseer was accustomed to administer. Moses was at a period of life which in that day was called youth; he was a proud and influential prince, whose education had not tended to give him self-control. He expected the Israelites to regard the action with gratitude, as an evidence that he was appointed to deliver them, Acts 7 : 25; he was full of heated and youthful imaginations of heroic deeds. His action proceeded from a generous and patriotic motive, but it proceeded too far and became a crime. It was bitterly punished. It made him a fugitive from Egypt, and from his own people whom he would have delivered, Acts 7 : 25, an humble shepherd in a desert to whose hardships he was unaccustomed, and an exile for forty dreary years. The failure of his hopes discouraged him from attempting the deliverance of his people; and the early conviction that he was their appointed deliverer entirely faded from his mind. But the discipline taught him that meekness which was ever afterward his marked characteristic, Num. 12 : 3, and doubtless also gave him that acquaintance with desert-life which was so necessary during the forty years of the wandering. The life of Moses has been hitherto hastily sketched in the book of Exodus; only such events have been noticed as exerted a marked influence upon his great work as the leader of Israel; but henceforth the writer dwells on the minute details of the history, for it ceases to be his own, and becomes the history of God's people.

1. **Was keeping.** It was his continuous occupation. At the end of forty years Moses was still a dependant in a strange land and obliged to labor for his living. A hard experience for the once favored Egyptian prince.

The flock. The original word is distinguished from that which signifies *herd*, and refers, as does the English word, not to cattle, but to sheep and goats. The charge of Moses was not thus limited, however, because the land afforded, as it does at present, no adequate pasturage for horses and cattle: it was far more fertile in antiquity than it now is, and must have supported the herds of the Israelites when they were encamped in it.

Jethro, his father-in-law. Jethro means *the preëminent*. The popular impression is that Jethro is identical with Reuel, the priest of Midian, Ex. 2 : 18. It rests on the term *father-in-law* which is here applied to him. But the original word means no more than a relative by marriage; it is used with reference to a son-in-law, Gen. 19 : 12, 14, a brother-in-law, Num. 10 : 29, a husband, Ex. 4 : 25, 26; and such is its wide range of meaning in other passages. We have no corresponding term in English. It is not probable, though it is possible, that he who in the preceding chapter is termed Reuel is here abruptly assigned another name. Probably Jethro was the brother-in-law of Moses. Reuel had seven marriageable daughters forty years before this, Ex. 2 : 16, and must have been then far advanced in life. During the interval he had probably died; and his son Jethro had succeeded to the hereditary priesthood. As head of the household he would be the proper one to dismiss Moses, Ex. 4 : 18. He may possibly be identified with the Hobab of Num. 10 : 29; but it is more

wilderness, and came to the Mountain of God, to Horeb.

probable that Hobab was a younger brother of Jethro; for he appears to have accompanied the Israelites, Num. 10: 29–32; Judg. 4: 11; and one in the position of Jethro would scarcely have deserted his tribe and his priestly duties.

A priest of Midian. Not "*the* priest" of the whole people, as in the Common Version, but one of many priests.

It is admitted by all that Jethro must have lived near the Gulf of Akaba; but whether on the eastern or western side is uncertain. KEIL: "The Midianites, who were descended from Abraham through Keturah, Gen. 25: 2, 4, had their principal settlements on the eastern side of the Gulf, from which they spread northward into the fields of Moab, Gen. 36: 35; Num. 22: 4, 7; 25: 6, 17; 31: 1 ff.; Jud. 6: 1 ff., and carried on a caravan trade through Canaan to Egypt, Gen. 37: 28, 36; Isai. 60: 6." The oldest traditions find the home of Jethro at Madian, five days journey from the head of the Gulf, and probably within the ancient territory of Midian, where there are still the ruins of a city, and where a well is shown as that from which Moses watered the flocks of his father-in-law. It is said to be in favor of this tradition that at Madian Moses would be quite safe from the Egyptians, as their power did not extend so far; but it has been recently ascertained that during the time which is with most probability assigned as that of the exile of Moses and the Exodus of the Israelites, the Egyptians abandoned their mines in the peninsula of Sinai, obtaining their supplies of copper from Syria; and the argument thus loses its force. The argument, in any case, would not be very forcible, as it is not probable that the Egyptian government would institute an expensive pursuit. It is urged against the tradition that Moses would hardly drive his flocks such a distance as Horeb, ver. 1; and that on finally leaving his refuge and returning to Egypt, he passed by Horeb, Ex. 4: 27, which would have been quite out of his way had he started from Madian.

Hence most critics place the home of Jethro near the apex of the Sinaitic triangle, at Sherm, about ten miles from Ras Muhammed, the southern headland. The intimate acquaintance of Hobab with the desert, Num. 10: 31, favors the conviction that his residence was not far away. At the same time, the situation of Sherm is sufficiently remote from the route of the Israelites to account for the fact that they did not come in contact with his people. It is not strange that a branch of the great Midianite family should be found at Sherm, for (1) communication between the two sides of the Gulf is so easy that at the present day sheep and goats are frequently brought for sale from Mukna, near Madian, to the peninsula of Sinai; (2) at various times the Bedouins from the district of Madian have removed and settled in the peninsula; (3) the Towara, the strongest tribe at present in the peninsula, are recognized by the best geographers as in fact Midianites; and they occupied Madian, on the other side of the Gulf, in the time of Mohammed, who received one of their chiefs, exclaiming: "Welcome to the brothers-in-law of Moses, welcome to the race of Shoeib," that is, Jethro; and they have removed to their present home, as perhaps did the Midianites who extended to Moses their hospitality. In fact, Strabo, Artimidarus, and Agatharcides speak of an ancient tribe near Sherm bearing the name of *Marianeis*, which is, perhaps, identical with *Midianites*, the d ך and r ך, owing to their similarity in Hebrew, and especially in ancient Hebrew, having been confounded, or, as frequently happened, interchanged. The same writers, according to Knobel, mention numerous groves of palm, abundance of fresh water, and a sanctuary under the care of an hereditary priest and priestess. Burckhardt visited Sherm; he says: "There are two large bays affording the only safe anchorage for large ships; on the southern bay is the tomb of an unknown sheikh; near the northern bay are several copious wells of brackish water, deep, and lined with ancient stones, apparently an ancient work, of considerable labor." Canon COOK: "The two harbors, the only safe ones on the coast, offered peculiar advantages to the Midianites, engaged as they were from the earliest times in the transport of merchandise."

Other Biblical events which bring the Midianites to view deserve brief notices. 1. The dismissal of the sons of the concubines, Midian being one of the number, "to the land in the east," Gen. 25: 4, 5, 6, the lands of Moab, Edom, Sinai, and other districts in the same general direction from the south of Palestine, where Abraham resided during most of his pastoral life. Midian had five sons, Gen. 25; 4; and his descendants seem to have acquired a vast and perhaps controlling influence among the people of the East. 2. The defeat of the Midianites in the field of Moab by Hadad, one of the early kings of Edom, Gen. 36: 35. This incidental notice enables us to determine that at the time to which it refers the Midianites were settled on the eastern borders of Moab and Edom. Their territory would force them to be a semi-nomad people, such as they are described in the Scriptures, partly living in tents as shepherds, partly engaged in commerce with Egypt, and hence settled in towns, and partly pursuing agriculture in the more fertile portions of their country. 3. The sale of Joseph to Midianite merchants, who were bearing to Egypt, where they were used in embalming the dead, such spices as were produced by their land in common with other parts of the East, Gen. 37: 25 ff. 4. The subjection of Midian, with Moab and Ammon, to Sihon, king of the Amorites, Judg. 11: 13–23; Josh.

[2] And Jehovah's angel appeared to him in a flame of

13: 21. This probably took place during the forty years of the wandering, as Sihon was still alive to oppose the progress of Israel near the close of the period. The destruction of Sihon by Moses, Num. 21: 21–32, probably set the Midianites free, and also inspired them with dread of the Israelites, and led to their subsequent wily hostility. 5. The effort of the Midianites to ruin the people of God, Num. 22: 4–7; 31: 16, 25, and the dreadful punishment which befel them, Num. 25: 17, 18, 31. The narrative reveals the fearful degeneracy of the Midianites, who had fallen into idolatry, with all its corruptions; and also their immense wealth. We have no information concerning the attitude which those Midianites with whom Moses had found refuge assumed during these events. They were remote, however, from the scene of action, and, perhaps, had no part in the intrigue or the destruction which followed. 6. The conquest of Palestine, two hundred years later, by this hostile people, who still preserved their hatred of Israel, and had recovered from the ruin inflicted by Moses, Judg. 6: 1–6. Midian was now probably at the head of a vast confederacy of Arabian tribes, Judg. 6: 3. The coalition was destroyed by Gideon, and the Midianites were so utterly annihilated that they do not reappear on the page of history, Judg. 6: 11–25; 7; 8: 1–28.

PORTER: "The government of Midian was doubtless similar to that of all the nations of Arabia, patriarchal. The nation was divided into a number of tribes, each of which was independent and led by its own *sheikh* or chief. In time of common danger or of war, the sheikhs of the various tribes formed a council, but always acknowledged the presidency of the head of one leading family, who was styled the 'prince' (*Emir*) of the nation. Five of the sheikhs of Midian are mentioned in Judges as subjects of Sihon. In Num. 31: 8 they are called 'kings;' while in Num. 22: 4 Moab is said to have consulted with the 'elders' of Midian. The great Arab tribes have two classes of chiefs: one class is composed of the rulers of the leading divisions of the tribe; the other of the rulers of subdivisions. The former are hereditary; the latter are simply influential or warlike men who, by their talents, have gathered around them a number of families. It would seem to be the former class, the hereditary rulers of Midian, who are called 'kings;' while the others, the influential leaders or senators of the tribe, are termed 'elders.'"

The Midianites are scarcely mentioned in profane history; they appear only in the Bible. But they have left interesting remains of their civilization and wealth. PORTER: "Recent investigations have shown that the whole desert east of Edom and Moab is thickly studded with the ruins of ancient cities and castles. These were doubtless the habitations of the Midianites. Everywhere there are evidences of partial cultivation in former days; and there are also traces of a comparatively dense population."

Behind. The original word is derived from one which signifies *the west*, since the Israelite looked upon the east as being before a man, and the west behind. A desert stretched between the gulf of Akabah and the mountains of the Sinaitic peninsula; and Moses crossed this to seek the richer pasture-grounds beyond.

Wilderness. The original word does not relate to the unproductive character of the district to which it is applied; it is used with reference to wilds, that is, lands affording herbage, but unoccupied by settlements. Both ancient and modern writers describe the district between Sherm and Sinai as comparatively barren; but the pasturage and water in the valleys near Sinai are good; and they were much better in antiquity than they are now. The two places are perhaps four days' journey apart. During the parched season of summer the Arabs are accustomed to resort to the Sinaitic valleys with their flocks; and it is hence inferred that the journey of Moses was made at the same season of the year. If so, his return to Egypt took place probably in the autumn. The winter was spent in making acquaintance with the Israelites and instructing and organizing them for their expected departure. The first interview with Pharaoh took place the following spring, in April or May; for the people were immediately afterwards sent forth to gather stubble, which could only be had at that season, Ex. 5: 12. Just a year later, they were liberated from bondage, the last plague occurring about the first of April, the date of the Passover.

The mountain of God. The mountain was beyond question the same with that on which Moses afterwards received the Law; see Ex. 3: 12. This appearance of the burning bush, and the subsequent manifestation of Jehovah at the enunciation of the Law, may have led the Israelites to regard the place as peculiarly sacred, and to give it the title of the text. Moses, who wrote the book of Exodus after these occurrences, would naturally designate the mountain by the name by which it was known among his people. Canon COOK: "On the other hand, it is assumed that the spot was previously held sacred. For this there is no ancient authority; though it has been lately shown that the whole peninsula was regarded by the Egyptians as specially consecrated to the gods from a very early time. An inscription at Sarbut el Chadem, dated the twenty-fifth year of Thotmes III., speaks of an officer charged to bring copper from the land of the gods."

Horeb. The word means *dry*. This is the name of the general mountain district, while "the

fire out of the midst of the thorn-bush: and he saw, and behold the thorn-bush burning in the fire, and the thorn-

mountain of God" was a particular eminence of the district, known elsewhere as Sinai. See the essay on the position of Sinai, under Ex. 20 : 1–17; the first paragraph.

2. **Jehovah's angel.** This is the literal translation of the original words; the Common Version uniformly renders them "the angel of the Lord." "Jehovah's angel" is a phrase which usually designates the second person of the Trinity as he was manifest to man before the Incarnation, Gen. 32 : 24; comp. vers. 28, 30 and Hos. 12 : 3, 4; Gen. 16 : 10, 13; 48 : 15, 16; Josh. 5 : 14; 6 : 2; Judg. 2 : 1; 13 : 22; Isai. 6 : 1; comp. Josh. 12 : 41; Isai. 63 : 9. Stephen terms the heavenly visitant simply "an angel," Acts 7 : 3; hence in the present instance the appearance may have been that of a created angel; but more probably the phrase "Jehovah's angel" is here as elsewhere applied to the second person of the Godhead. In either case, the voice was that of God himself, ver. 4; Acts 7 : 31, 32, manifested through the Son.

The angels are spiritual beings, Heb. 1 : 4, of a nature exalted above that of man, Heb. 2 : 7, though infinitely beneath that of God, Job 4 : 18. They have usually appeared in human form, Gen. chs. 18, 19; Luke 24 : 4; Acts 1 : 10, even when surrounded with heavenly glory, Dan. 10 : 6, and, unless Rev. 14 : 6 be an exception, they are never represented with wings. They have been subjected to temptation; and such as resisted are termed *holy*, Mark 8 : 38; Luke 9 : 26, and *elect*, 1 Tim. 5 : 21; and those who fell are kept unto the judgment of the great day, Jude 6. The holy angels are beings of vast power, Ps. 103 : 20; 2 Pet. 2 : 11, who behold and adore God in heaven, 1 K. 22 : 19; Isai. 6 : 1–3; Dan. 7 : 9–10; Rev. 5 : 11, and fulfil His commands on the earth in the punishment of the disobedient, Ex. 12 : 23; Heb. 11 : 28; 1 Cor. 10 : 10; 2 Sam. 24 : 16; 1 Chron. 21 : 16; 2 K. 19 : 35; Acts 12 : 22, and in the protection and deliverance of the righteous, Gen. 19 : 15; 7 : 40; 27 : 12; 32 : 1; Acts 5 : 19; 8 : 26; 10 : 3; 12 : 7; 27 : 23; Matt. 18 : 10; Luke 16 : 22; and specially Heb. 1 : 14. They are intensely interested in the plan of redemption, 1 Pet. 1 : 12; Matt. 1 : 20; Luke 2 : 13; Matt. 4 : 11; Luke 22 : 43; Matt. 28 : 2; John 20 : 12; Acts 1 : 10, 11; Luke 15 : 10. They are present in the assemblies of Christian worshippers, 1 Cor. 11 : 10; they accompany the souls of the redeemed into the world of blessed spirits, Luke 16 : 22; and they are appointed to assist as the ministers of Christ at the judgment of the last day, Matt. 13 : 39, 41, 49; 16 : 27; 24 : 31. That there are degrees of angelic nature and station is inferred from Eph. 1 : 21; Rom. 8 : 38; and Jude 6, Revised New Testament. G. W. CLARK: "The existence of angels accords with reason as well as with revelation. As we behold in creation a descending order of beings below man, so it is natural to suppose that there is an ascending order above man toward the infinite God."

A flame of fire. The angels assume such forms as God wills. There seems to be a reference to the text in Ps. 104 : 4.

Out of the midst. The flame did not merely envelop the bush, but burned in the midst of its branches, wrapping them all in fire, as if it fed upon their substance.

The thorn-bush. The definite article is used in the original to designate the particular bush which Moses may have pointed out to the Israelites during their visit to the same place, and of which he had at least often spoken to them. The word rendered *thorn-bush* is probably not so generic as the English word *bush*, used in the Common Version, for which the Hebrew has another term; it refers to a particular kind of shrub, probably the wild acacia, or possibly the hawthorn, both of which are found in the neighborhood. The Hebrew word is used only in reference to the thorn-bush of Moses. The same word is found in the Egyptian papyri, as the designation of a particular kind of shrub; and it probably passed from the Egyptian language to the Hebrew. The Greek word employed in the New Testament, Luke 20 : 37; Acts 7 : 35, is more generic, and refers to any sort of thorn-bush or bramble. It is best to suppose that the bush was a shrub of such size as to render the manifestation imposing. We may find a hint of the profound and lasting impression which it made upon Moses in Deut. 33 : 16. The monks of St. Catherine, near Sinai, have planted a bramble-bush near their chapel to mark the spot where they say the flame appeared.

Not consumed. It was this which arrested the attention of Moses, ver. 3.

The thorn-bush, burning yet not consumed, was doubtless intended as a significant symbol. 1. To Moses, upon reflection, it would probably appear as a type of Israel subjected to the furnace of affliction, yet kept by the power of God from being consumed. 2. As Israel was a type of Christ, Matt. 2 : 15, 17, 18, the thorn-bush may also represent him surrounded by sorrows, yet triumphing over them. 3. We may regard it also as a symbol of God's people in every age, wasted by the fires of enmity, yet sustained by divine grace. 4. It also represents every godly soul, which shall triumph over the persecutions and temptations of this world. These significations are not alien one from another; they are bound together by the promises of God to his Son and the people who honor that Son as their common Head. The consumption of sin by trial finds no place in the symbol; the thorn-bush was not consumed.

3 bush not consumed. And Moses said: Let me turn aside,
and see this great sight, why the thorn-bush does not burn.
4 And Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see; and God
called to him out of the midst of the thorn-bush, and said:
5 Moses, Moses. And he said: Here am I. And he said:
Approach not hither: put off thy shoes from thy feet, for
the place on which thou standest is holy ground.
6 And he said: I am the God of thy father, God of Abra-

3. **Let me turn aside and see.** A laudable curiosity, exercised by a sincere mind, cannot but lead to God.

4. **Jehovah saw.....God called.** The interchange of words is remarkable; the same being is designated by both; Jehovah is God, and God is Jehovah. Yet the two names are to be distinguished. According to its derivation the word *Jehovah* means *the Existing One;* his existence, however, is to be thought of not as a mere blank of being, but as an eternal life of energy and manifestation. The word here properly rendered God, *Elohim*, corresponds to our word *Almighty*. This distinction in the meaning of the words gives rise to a consistent distinction in their use, which is well stated by Rev. W. A. WRIGHT, in Smith's Bible Dictionary: "While Elohim exhibits God displayed in his power as the creator and governor of the physical universe, the name Jehovah designates his nature as he stands in relation to man, as the only, almighty, true, personal, holy Being, a spirit, and 'the father of spirits,' Num. 16: 22; comp. John 4: 24, who revealed himself to his people, made a covenant with them, and became their lawgiver, and to whom all honor and worship are due." "The Israelites are the people of Jehovah, Ex. 32: 20, the congregation of Jehovah, Num. 16: 3, as the Moabites are the people of Chemosh, Jer. 48: 46." "He was pre-eminently distinguished as the tutelary deity of the Hebrews." "Elohim is used in many cases of the gods of the heathen," as we apply the word *god* to them. "It denoted generally the Deity when spoken of as a supernatural being, and when no national feeling influenced the speaker." "To the Syrians the Jehovah of the Hebrews was only their national God, one of the Elohim, 1 K. 20: 23, 28." "Such and no more was he to the heathen, 1 K. 20: 23; but all this and much more to the Israelites, to whom Jehovah was a distinct personal subsistence, the living God, who reveals himself to man by word and deed, helps, guides, saves, and delivers." "Jehovah was no abstract name, but thoroughly practical." "While Elohim represents God only in his most outward relation to man, and distinguishes him as recognized in his omnipotence, Jehovah describes him according to his innermost being. In Jehovah the moral attributes are presented as constituting the essence of his nature, whereas in Elohim there is no reference to personality or moral character." It is to be regretted that this distinction between the two words, Elohim expressing the abstract idea of God as a supreme power, and Jehovah the idea of God as graciously manifested to his people, in his most endearing relations, is quite obscured in the Common Version. For a further discussion of the name Jehovah, see notes to Ex. 6: 3.

5. **Approach not.** He was approaching the thorn-bush to inspect it more closely, ver. 3.

Put off thy shoes. JAMIESON. "The direction was in conformity with a usage which was well known to Moses; for the Egyptian priests observed it in their temples; and it is observed in all Eastern countries, where the people take off their shoes or sandals as we do our hats. But the Eastern idea is not precisely the same as the Western. With us, the removal of the hat is an expression of reverence for the place we enter, or rather of Him who is worshipped there. With them the removal of the shoes is a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness." The symbolism is obvious; the shoes are defiled with the earth.

Holy ground. This seems to prove that the mountain was not previously considered holy, and that it gained its sacred character and its name, ver. 1, from the occurrence of the text, and the subsequent publication of the law. Otherwise, after a long residence in the desert, Moses would not have needed to be told that the place was holy. A certain reverence for holy places, far removed, however, from the superstitions of false religions, has its sanction in the word of God.

6. **The God of thy father.** And therefore a God of mercy and faithfulness. The word *father* probably refers to the immediate progenitor of Moses, of whose piety we are assured, Heb. 11: 23. The words of this verse were designed not merely as an introduction to what follows, but an assurance of kindness. They, however, only filled Moses with awe; see the last sentence of the verse, and Acts 7: 32.

ham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob. And Moses covered
7 his face; for he was afraid to look at God. And Jehovah said: I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and their cry by reason of their drivers,
8 have I heard; for I know their sorrows. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to lead them up out of this land into a good and broad land, into a land flowing with milk and honey, into the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the

God of Abraham, etc. Canon COOK: "Our Saviour adduces the passage as a proof that the doctrine of the resurrection was taught in the Old Testament; and he calls this book the book of Moses, two points to be borne in mind by readers of the Pentateuch." See Practical Observations on this lesson, No. 12. The enumeration of these patriarchal names would serve to remind Moses of the covenant of God and the promises recorded in Gen. 15: 13, where the exact duration of the Egyptian bondage is predicted. Since the rash attempt to arouse the Israelites forty years before, Moses had lost hope, and needed reassurance. Notwithstanding the gracious words, he still desponds, ver. 11.

He was afraid to look at God. He regarded the flame as a symbolical embodiment of God. It was the prevalent impression of the Israelites that to behold God in any form would produce death, Judg. 13: 22; Gen. 16: 13; 32: 30; Deut. 5; 26. It was not the excessive splendor of the flame which caused him to hide his face.

7. **I have surely seen.** The expression is emphatic, representing the deep concern of God with the affliction. Moses had perhaps been often tempted in his hours of bitterness to feel that God had forgotten.

My people. He had seemed to cast them off: but they were yet his own. They had sinned; but he still claimed them. Such is ever his mercy to his people in their sorrows.

Drivers. Canon COOK: "A different word from that used in ch. 1: 11." It refers to those who drove the unwilling Israelites with cruel punishments to their tasks.

For. Assigns the reason for what had been said.

I know. The phrase is not merely equivalent to *I am aware of;* it expresses the deep acquaintance of sympathy and tenderness: "I have seen the affliction, for I have felt it." *To know* has often in the Scriptures a very pregnant meaning, Ps. 103: 14; Nahum 1: 7.

8. **I have come down.** The language of God is accommodated to our modes of conception, Gen. 11: 5.

Good. Though Palestine is now comparatively unproductive, all ancient writers testify to its great fertility, and to the variety and excellence of its productions.

And broad. Much larger than the land of Goshen, and affording room for a great population; in fact, too large for Israel to occupy all of it at once, Deut. 7: 22.

Flowing with milk and honey. A proverbial expression; in use also among the Greeks. It was literally true, however, in reference to Palestine. As a pasture-land, it flowed with milk. The abundance of its honey, the stores of wild bees, is still remarked by travellers.

Canaanite. From the Canaanites the whole land was named, Ex. 6: 4, because they constituted the most influential part of its inhabitants, Ex. 6: 4. They occupied the valley of the Jordan and the plains by the Mediterranean Sea, Num. 13: 29. See on Ex. 6: 4. Nearly, and perhaps quite, all the following names designate descendants of Canaan, Gen. 10: 15-18; but it is certain from Num. 3: 29 that the word *Canaanite* had come to have a restricted meaning, and was applied to only one branch of his offspring. See further on Ex. 6: 4.

The Hittite. A nation descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan, Gen. 10: 15. They occupied the country around Hebron, then called Kirjath Arba, to the south of Jerusalem. Abraham dwelt among them for a time, and purchased from them the field and cave of Machpelah, Gen. 23: 19; 25: 9. They seem to have been commercial, rather than warlike; and their courtesy was marked; but they were comparatively weak, Gen. 12: 6; 13: 7. It was from the Hittites that Esau obtained his first two wives; and judging from these, the people must have been irreligious and immoral, Gen. 26: 35; 27: 46; 28: 2. During the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, they seem to have retired from their southern position before the Amalekites, Num. 13: 29, to a position more easily defended, perhaps to

9 Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebuzite. And now,

the fastness which afterwards became Jerusalem, Ezek. 16 : 3, 45. They were engaged with the other Canaanitish tribes in resisting Joshua, Josh. 9 : 1; 11 : 3. Ahimelech, 1 Sam. 26 : 6, and Uriah, 2 Sam. 23 : 39; 1 Chron. 11 : 41, both attached to David, were Hittites. Solomon had Hittite women among his wives, 1 K. 11 : 1. From the names of the Hittites recorded in the Bible, it is inferred that their language was nearly allied to the Hebrew, though they themselves belonged to a different race.

The Egyptian annals speak of a powerful confederacy of Hittites in northern Palestine, in the valley of the Orontes. The Assyrian inscriptions seem to refer to the same confederacy. It is probably to this branch of the Hittites that allusion is made in Josh. 1 : 4; Judg. 1 : 26; 1 K. 10 : 29; 1 Chron. 1 : 17, comp. 1 K. 4 : 24; 2 K. 7 : 6.

The Amorite. This people, whose name means *the dwellers on the summits, the mountaineers*, were descended from the fourth son of Canaan, Gen. 10 : 16. The earliest notice, Gen. 14 : 7, represents them as dwelling on the barren heights west of the Dead Sea. They are next found near Hebron, Gen. 13 : 18, comp. Gen. 14 : 13. They aided Abraham to rescue Lot, Gen. 14 : 24. Later they seem to have crossed the Jordan, and to have taken from the Moabites the rich pasture-land between the Jabbok and the Arnon, Num. 21 : 13, 26. They refused the Israelites a passage through this territory, Num. 21 : 22; Deut. 2 : 26, and met the chosen people with hostility, and were defeated and dispossessed of the land, Num. 21 : 24, 25, 31; Deut. 2 : 34–36. North of this territory they also held the country on the east of the Jordan to the foot of Hermon, Deut. 3 : 8–10; 4 : 48, and part of the valley on the west, Deut. 4 : 49. They probaby also held the mountains west of the Azazamat and south of Palestine, Deut. 1 : 19, 20. See on Num. 20 : 7. There were two distinct nations on the west of the Jordan designated by the one name, Deut. 2 : 10; 31 : 4; Josh. 2 : 10; 9 : 10; 24 : 12; but we are not acquainted with the limits of their territory or their relations with one another. After the conquest of Canaan, the Amorites utterly disappear from history.

Perizzite. Their origin is unknown, as is also the meaning of their name; but the best conjecture makes the name equivalent to *rustics, dwellers in unwalled villages;* hence they are supposed to have been engaged in agriculture, like the lower population of Egypt. They were in Palestine in the time of Abraham, Gen. 13 : 7, and Jacob, Gen. 34 : 30. In the book of Judges they are placed in southern Palestine, Judg. 1 : 4, 5; and they were also found as far north as Mount Carmel, Josh. 17 : 15–18. They were among the remnants of the old population reduced to servitude by Solomon, 1 K. 9 : 20; 2 Chron. 8 : 7. They are usually mentioned, as here, in the list of peoples who occupied the promised land before the invasion of Joshua, Gen. 15 : 20; Ex. 3 : 8, 17; 23 : 23; 33 : 2; 34 : 11; Deut. 7 : 1; 20 : 17; Josh. 3 : 10; 9 : 1; 24 : 11; Judg. 3 : 5; Ezra 9 : 1; Neh. 9 : 8.

Hivite. The name is explained by Ewald as *midlander*, and by Gesenius as *villager*. Both explanations are merely conjectural. The Hivites were descendants of Canaan through his sixth son, Gen. 10 : 17; 1 Chron. 1 : 15. The name is constantly found in the list of peoples who occupied Palestine before the Israelites : see the references in the preceding paragraph. One of Esau's wives belonged to this people, Gen. 34 : 2. They occupied Shechem in the time of Jacob, Gen. 34 : 2; and we infer from Gen. 34 that they were distinguished for immorality, for habits of gain, Gen. 34 : 10, 21, 23, 28, 29, and for impetuosity and credulity. The deception practiced by the sons of Jacob upon the Hivites was returned at a later date, Josh. 9 : 3–27. They had four cities in Palestine proper at the time of its conquest, Josh. 9 : 17; but their principal possessions were far north, Josh. 11 : 3; Judg. 3 : 3; 2 Sam. 24 : 7.

Jebusite. Descended from the third son of Canaan, Gen. 10 : 16. In the formula of the peoples who occupied Palestine before the Israelites, the Jebusites are always named last, indicating, perhaps, their inferiority. See the references in the preceding note on the *Perizzites*. They were mountaineers, Num. 13 : 29; Josh. 11 : 3. Their chief stronghold seems to have been Jebus, afterwards a part of Jerusalem; its king was killed in the battle of Beth-horon, Josh. 10 : 1, 5, 26; comp. Josh. 12 : 10; it was destroyed by the men of Judah, Judg. 1 : 21; but it was subsequently recovered by the Jebusites, Josh. 15 : 8, 36; Judg. 1 : 21; 19 : 11, and held until the time of David, by whom it was conquered, 2 Sam. 5 : 6. It was situated on the south-western hill of Jerusalem, now identified with the Mount Zion of the Scriptures; and the recent excavations in the vicinity demonstrate the strength of the walls and the natural advantages of the situation which explain its continued occupation by the Jebusite garrison in spite of all efforts to subdue it. Araunah, 2 Sam. 24 : 23; 1 Chron. 21 : 23, appears to have been a descendant of the Jebusite kings.

Canon COOK : "This is the first passage in this book where the enumeration, so often repeated, of the nations then in possession of Palestine, is given. Moses was to learn at once the extent of the promise and the greatness of the enterprise. In Egypt, the forces, situation, and character of these nations was then well known. Aahmes I. had invaded the south of Palestine in his pursuit of the Shasous; Thotmes I. had traversed the whole land on his campaign in Syria and Mesopotamia; rep-

behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come unto me, and also I have seen the oppression with which the Egyp-
10 tians oppress them. And now go, and I will send thee to Pharaoh; and bring thou forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.

resentations of the Cheta, identified by most Egyptologers with the Hittites, are common on the monuments of the 18th and 19th dynasties, and give a strong impression of their civilization, riches, and specially of their knowledge of the arts of war. They had great numbers of chariots; 892 were taken from them by Thotmes III. in one battle." Moses would, therefore, at once understand the promise.

9. **The cry . . . is come unto me.** This shows that in their afflictions the people had turned to God in prayer; the trial had wrought a merciful work.

10. **I will send thee.** These words revealed to Moses the purpose of the vision, and startled him into immediate reply. Had the proposition been made forty years earlier, it would have been hailed with enthusiasm, Acts 7: 25, though both Moses and his people were at that time unqualified for its execution. But the long interval of disappointment, discouragement, and obscurity had left in his mind the conviction that he was unfit for the task.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. God often calls his servants to pass through obscurity into usefulness, ver. 1. Moses dwelt in the desert; Christ was brought up in secluded Nazareth. If he wills that we remain in humble obscurity, let us be content.

2. Moses an example of contentment, ver. 1.

3. When God calls us to a great work, it is wicked to refuse, ver. 16, comp. Ex. 4: 10–14. He calls us now to the great work of delivering souls.

4. It is right and natural that places which God has distinguished by the special manifestations of his presence, should be considered sacred, as the Church, and the room devoted to secret prayer, ver. 1.

5. The uses and abuses of curiosity, ver. 3. Profane and irreverent curiosity concerning God forbidden, vers. 5, 6.

6. We should never think of God, or speak his name, or draw near him in prayer, without the utmost reverence, ver. 5.

7. The "shoes" of ver. 5 may represent our earthly thoughts and interests, covered as it were with the dust of this world; we should always put them out of the mind when we enter the house of God or engage in prayer.

8. How terrible God will prove to those who approach him at the last day without having put aside their sins! ver. 5.

9. God's people may be surrounded by the flames of persecution, but they cannot be consumed, ver. 3.

10. The people of God were the people of Jesus in the Old Dispensation as they are in the New, vers. 2, 7, notes.

11. Contrast the awful manifestations of Jesus in the Old Testament, before he had assumed our nature, with the familiarity of his manifestations in the New Testament, in our nature. In heaven his people shall doubtless find his manifestations thus familiar and endearing, as he has there our nature at once veiling and revealing his divinity.

12. The Patriarchs of ver. 6 are now living, and they await the resurrection of the last day. See our Lord's splendid argument, Matt. 22: 32, in answer to the Sadducees, who taught that as the soul perishes at death, so that there is "neither angel nor spirit," there can be no resurrection.

13. The children of pious parents are beloved of God for the parents' sake, ver. 7; yet not if they persist in impenitence.

14. When a nation which has sinned humbles itself in genuine penitence God hears its cry and restores it to prosperity, vers. 7, 8.

15. God beholds every sorrow upon earth, ver. 7. Let us, then, take our griefs to him assured that he fully understands them.

16. God forgives the penitent sinner, vers. 7, 8.

17. God not only remits the penalty due to the penitent sinner, but of his free grace confers the choicest gifts, joy here, and heaven hereafter, vers. 7, 8.

LESSON IV.—DOUBTS REMOVED. CHAP. 4 : 1–9, 27–31.

1 AND Moses answered and said: But behold, they will not believe me, and will not hearken to my voice; for they
2 will say: Jehovah has not appeared to thee. And Jehovah said to him: What is that in thy hand? And he said: A
3 staff. And he said: Cast it to the earth. And he cast it to the earth, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled

It has been well remarked that had Moses written for his own praise, or had some author composed the book of Exodus as a romance, or were it a collection of national myths, these doubts would not have been mentioned. The romance and the myth always glorify their hero by representing him as above such weaknesses.

In order to fully appreciate the state of mind in which God found Moses, and the patience with which God met every objection of his servant, the teacher should glance back at the preceding chapter, vers. 11–22. The first plea of Moses was his own unfitness: he knew the haughtiness of Egypt and the dispirited and abject condition of his people. The difficulties of the enterprise arose before him. Forty years of disappointment had quenched the ardor and hope with which he had once looked forward to the very task which he now shunned, Acts 7 : 25. His feeling was not one of personal fear, but of personal incompetence. To remove this objection God promised to be with his servant, and assured him of success by predicting that with his people, free from Egypt, he should worship where he was then standing, vers. 11, 12. The next objection was that the people would demand to know the name of the God by whom Moses was commissioned, and with whom he professed such intimacy. The word *name*, when applied to God, means not merely the appellation by which he is distinguished from other beings, but the appellation which expresses his characteristics: to the Hebrew the name was always associated with the character of him who bore it. Of the several names of God, El, Elohim, El Shaddai, Jehovah, Moses would choose that one which best expressed God's new course of action toward his people. God graciously gave the name for which Moses asked: it differed but slightly from *Jehovah*, and was intended as an explanation of the name Jehovah, which expressed the active and endearing relations of God to his people. See the preceding lesson, ver. 4, first paragraph; and also on Ex. 6 : 3. He associated this name with his mercies to the fathers, ver. 15, and with the brightest promises for the future, vers. 16, 17. He promised that the Israelites should hear Moses, ver. 18, that Pharaoh should for a while resist, vers. 19, 20, and that the people should at length go forth free, and with great substance, *asked*, and not *borrowed*, as the Common Version unfortunately has it, of the Egyptians, vers. 21, 22.

This led to the third objection. God had promised that the Israelites should hearken to their deliverer; but Moses finds a difficulty which he thinks will prevent their doing so.

1. **They will not believe me, etc.** Moses had as yet received no commission to work miracles; and he spoke with reference to his actual situation: to take the message of God to the Israelites without the confirmation of signs would be to invoke the charge of imposture. There is no recorded manifestation of God to the chosen people since he appeared to Jacob on the way to Egypt, Gen. 46 : 2, nearly four hundred and thirty years before. Moses had been for forty years an exile, and was therefore a stranger to the great mass of the nation. His apprehensions were therefore natural, though they indicated a want of faith in the assurances of God already given: that which is natural is not always faultless.

2. **Thy hand.** The three miracles related to the hand of Moses; for the hand is the symbol of a man's power, being that through which his power is chiefly manifested.

Thy bosom. The open part of the inner robe, above the girdle.

A staff. This was not a shepherd's crook; but the long staff, higher than the head, which it was customary for Egyptian gentlemen to bear, much as we carry canes. These rods were usually made of acacia wood; they are figured on the Egyptian monuments; and the chiefs of the Egyptian Arabs may be still seen carrying them as symbols of authority.

3. **A serpent.** This miracle, in common with those which follow, was not merely a sign of Jehovah's presence, but it was a symbol designed to encourage Moses in his high mission. The serpent is supposed to have been the basalisk or cobra. Canon COOK: "This was the symbol of royal and divine power on the diadem of every Pharaoh. It was a poisonous snake, as is shown by the flight of

4 from before it. And Jehovah said to Moses: Stretch forth
thy hand and seize its tail. And he stretched forth his
5 hand and seized it, and it became a staff in his hand. That
they may believe that Jehovah, God of their fathers, God

Moses and by most passages in which the same word occurs, *nahash*, derived from hissing. This snake never attacks without first inflating its neck and then hissing; on the monuments it is always represented with its neck enormously swollen." The serpent was therefore the symbol of the Egyptian power.

Fled from before it. As he had fled from Egypt on account of the anger of the king. The Egyptian court, which had once been his staff of dignity, had pursued him with the enmity of the serpent, and was again to confront him with hostility.

4. **Seize it by the tail.** As he was to lay hold of the Egyptian power and master it.

Seized it. The faith of Moses is already growing: at the command of God he handles the deadly serpent.

It became a staff in his hand. Not only harmless, but a help. So Egypt, with all its enmity, was to prove not only unable to hurt him and his people, but was to actually aid them in their escape, Ex. 3: 21, 22.

5. **That they may believe.** It is implied that the miracle was to be repeated before the Israelites. The meaning of such symbols is quickly read in the East; and the Israelites would readily interpret the miracle, as Moses must have done. It was, therefore, not simply a sign of the divine presence, but a prophecy of success and freedom, and in both aspects adapted to commend Moses to his people. From ver. 21 we learn that these miracles of the text were to be performed also in the presence of Pharaoh. The first and third were performed in his presence, Ex. 7; but the performance of the second is not recorded.

So far as we know this was the first miracle ever performed through the agency of man. KURTZ: "It is a striking fact that in the whole of the patriarchal history, and in the primeval history anterior to it, we do not meet with a single miracle performed by a man. Where any miracles occur, they are performed solely and exclusively by God himself. We have in this fact a decisive argument against every mythical explanation of the patriarchal history. With what a dense nimbus of miracles would any legendary tale have enveloped the heads of the celebrated founders of the race!" Not only was this the first miracle ever performed through man, but it was the first of that series which accompanied the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and their establishment in the promised land.

Miracles have been defined as contraventions of natural law. This unfortunate definition has led many, who believe that the laws of nature are uniform in their operation and hence exempt from such contravention, to doubt that there have been miracles and to reject the revelation of God which they were designed to attest. Both those who frame this definition, and those who reject the miracles of the Scriptures on account of it, mean by *the laws of nature* the laws of only the material universe, which are the chief study of modern scientists: they shut their eyes to the fact that mind as well as matter is a part of nature; they forget that mind not less than matter is endowed with certain forces, and that the forces of mind are superior to those of matter. The mind of man is able, not to annihilate or suspend, but to govern the forces of the material world, as when it lifts the arm, or turns the river, or employs the expansive power of steam, or analyzes the rock, or bends the sunbeam from its course. This is a law of nature. The angels for aught we know may be endowed with far greater powers. God, inasmuch as he is almighty, has perfect control of all the forces of the universe. Now when mind, whether in the person of man, or angel, or God, controls the forces of the physical universe, it does but express its nature, though the result is in some cases what we term a miracle. Miracles result from the exercise of mind over matter in such a way as to change the ordinary course of nature, and not in such a way as to abrogate or suspend its laws.

Many persons conceive the material universe to be a huge machine wound up, perhaps, in the beginning, by God, but continuing to move, like a clock, by virtue of inherent forces. It is forgotten that the force inherent in the clock is presently spent, and that if the universe moves only by virtue of a primitive impulse, it tends to ultimate stagnation and death. The Christian theory is that the laws of matter are the expression of the divine thought everywhere present and constantly active; for a force must have a perennial fountain or it is presently exhausted; no law of matter can be self-sustaining. The procedures of nature are regular and orderly, as in the movements of the worlds, and the progressive development of the forces of life upon the earth, because order is a law of mind, and because God, being infinite in all perfections, is infinite in his love of order: "God is not the author of confusion," 1 Cor. 14: 33. If the order of material nature flows from the presence of an order-loving Mind, superior to all its forces, we can easily conceive that such a Mind, in the pursuit of high and

of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, has appeared
6 to thee. And Jehovah said to him again: Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and he took it out, and, behold, his hand was leprous, like

holy purposes, the restoration of moral order to the world, and the salvation of lost souls, would exert its power in wondrous and convincing signs of its presence. Such manifestations might be expected. They are not contrary to the laws of nature; for nature, including in the term the realm of mind, has her moral as well as her physical laws; and the moral laws are of infinitely greater moment than the physical.

We should anticipate the exercise of such a power, however, only when there is pressing necessity for it. Hence, miracles have not been common to all periods of even the Biblical history. We distinguish in that history but three periods of miraculous display: the first was the period of the Exodus and the conquest of Palestine, when miracles seemed necessary to the accomplishment of the divine purpose; the second was during the lives of Elijah and Elisha, when corruption and idolatry had almost put out the light of Israel; and the third was during the infancy of the Christian dispensation. Thus, Moses, Elijah, and Christ were fitly associated on the mount of transfiguration, as the representatives of great crises in the world's history. At other times there have been isolated miracles necessary to the accomplishment of great purposes, but these three periods stand forth in special grandeur.

We have thus far, for convenience, considered the miracle as the manifestation of mind in its control of matter. It is evident, however, that in regeneration, inspiration, and illumination, we have the miraculous power of God displayed in the realm of mind. But even these highest of all miracles are not in contravention of natural laws; God operates according to "the law of the Spirit of life," Rom. 8: 2, and according also to those laws with which he has endowed our souls, Prov. 21: 1.

The design of the miracle is to arrest attention and provoke investigation of its cause. Inasmuch as the cause cannot be found in the laws of matter, nor in the laws of the human mind, it must be sought in a presence higher than either. The miracle, therefore, becomes a sign that there is a power greater than any which we recognize in our ordinary experience, that it is present with us, and that it seeks to impress our souls for a purpose of its own. The moral character of the power is to be judged by the moral character of its communications, Deut. 13: 1–3; Isai. 8: 20. If the communications sanctioned by the sign are in accordance with our consciousness of right and with the known will of God, they are from his Spirit; if they are contrary to these they are from an evil source. They are to be judged by their fruits; and there need be no difficulty in thus determining their nature. If it should be proven, for example, that the wonders of so-called Spiritualism are the manifestations of spiritual presences, it would yet remain for us to compare the communications which they accompany, with the Word of God, before we accept them as sanctioned by his will. If these communications are evil, they are not from him.

The miracles are also often the symbols of truth, the vehicles of special instruction, as are those of the text.

The proofs that miracles have been wrought are too cogent to be set aside; no facts of history are better attested than these. Consider (1) the large numbers of the witnesses, (2) their intellectual qualifications to avoid deception, exhibited in such men as Moses, John, and Paul, (3) their high moral character, forbidding the supposition that they could be parties to deceit, and (4) the steadfastness with which they continued to bear their testimony, though they gained by it only disgrace and stripes and imprisonment and cruel death.

6. **Thy hand.** The symbol of power.

Into thy Bosom. An attitude of repose.

Leprous. Manetho describes the Israelites in Egypt as a nation of lepers; and though his statement is evidently the expression of national antipathy, it may have a foundation in fact. The hard life of the Israelites, inevitably accompanied by habits of uncleanliness, must have tended to produce frightful diseases; and the legislation of Moses concerning leprosy in the 13th and 14th chapters of Leviticus justifies the inference that it was prevalent among them. It is much disputed whether the leprosy described by Moses is identical with modern leprosy. Many of the symptoms are the same; but many again, seem to be different. It is well-known, however, that a disease may change its character in the course of ages, owing, perhaps, to changes in the climate, the food, and the habits of the people. It is most probable that the modern leprosy is the lineal descendant of the Mosaic leprosy, if not identical with it. The descriptions of leprosy given by ancient Greek writers render it probable that the leprosy of our Saviour's day was similar to that now observed in Palestine. It appears first in red and shining

7 snow. And he said: Return thy hand to thy bosom.
And he returned his hand to his bosom; and he took it out
of his bosom, and, behold, it was restored like his flesh.
8 And it shall be, if they believe thee not, and hearken not
to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the

elevations of the skin, each depressed in the middle and all arranged in circular patches. The elevations are soon covered with white scales, accumulating to a thick crust. The patches perpetually increase in size, and the hair upon them is whitened. The hair falls from the head and eyebrows; the nails decay and drop off; the fingers and toes shrivel and fall away joint by joint. The gums recede and the teeth drop out. The nose, and eyes, and tongue are gradually eaten; and finally death ends the torture. The leprosy does not appear to be contagious; but it is hereditary for generations. Its progress is slow: those born with it sometimes attain the age of fifty; and persons attacked after birth have lived twenty years. In its advanced stages it is absolutely incurable. It is the most dreadful disease of the East, and hence it is called *a plague, a stroke.* It was sometimes sent as a special judgment for sin, Num. 12: 10; 2 K. 5: 27; 2 Chron. 26: 20.

The legislation of Moses does not necessarily imply that he regarded the disease as contagious. Its hereditary character was doubtless the earthly ground of the severe restrictions which he imposed upon it, restrictions which, separating the victim from his family, if he was married, and discouraging marriage if he was not, tended to limit it and stamp it out. The legislation of Moses had also a spiritual ground. As the most terrible disease known to the people, leprosy was considered by both Jews and Gentiles the symbol of sin. Like sin, it begins in a hidden infection and appears in a minute and apparently insignificant form, and spreads over the whole person. Like our fallen natures, it is hereditary. Like sin, it can be cured by God alone. G. W. CLARK: "The leper was regarded as unclean; he was to rend his garments, let his hair hang down dishevelled, wear garments of mourning as for the dead, and live in seclusion outside the camp or city. So strictly was this last regulation enforced, that neither Miriam, the sister of Moses, nor king Uzziah, was exempted from it, Num. 12: 15; 2 Chron. 26: 21. He was to warn off every one whom he happened to meet by crying Unclean, Unclean! Every one and everything he touched was defiled. Leprosy was indeed regarded as a living death, Joseph. Antiq. 3: 11, 3. Thus not only was he while diseased to be excluded from society, as if in effect dead, and to wear garments of mourning as for the dead; but if healed he was to be cleansed by the same means as for uncleanness through touching or handling the dead, Num. 19: 18-20; Lev. 14: 4-7. And thus sin affects the soul, pervading the whole being, rendering it unclean, separating it from God, producing spiritual death, unfitting it for ever for heaven and the company of the holy, and ensuring its eternal banishment, as polluted and abominable."

Like snow. Intense and shining white was the characteristic color of leprosy.

7. **He returned his hand to his bosom again.** With the same symbolical reference to repose and protection as before.

Restored, like his flesh. Perfectly restored.

KURTZ: "The bosom is the place into which the hand is put to shelter it from cold and other evils; in the warmth of the bosom it is protected and cherished as in a mother's lap. But behold, in that very place, in which we expect it to be protected and warmed, the hand of Moses becomes leprous. Leprosy was impurity in its worst possible form, and for this reason the leper was put away and banished from the society of his fellow-citizens. These data, which are indisputable, are amply sufficient to explain the sign. That which happened to the hand of Moses was a picture of what had happened, and was still to happen, to the children of Israel. Through the favor of the first Pharaohs, Egypt was undoubtedly a hiding-place, in which the family of Jacob had been cherished and preserved, when it was distressed both in body and mind. But there had been a change in both the men and the times, and Israel was enslaved, despised, and held in abomination in the land of Egypt. When Israel departed from Egypt, he was like a homeless leper. But Jehovah led him once more to a hiding-place, where he was cleansed from the leprosy which he had brought with him from Egypt, and where he was set apart as a holy people and a priestly nation. It is very easy to explain why this sign was not exhibited before Pharaoh as well as the others, Ex. 7. The thing signified was of too internal and spiritual a nature; it was too closely connected with the counsel of God concerning his people to be appropriately displayed to Pharaoh. The objects indicated by this sign were such as could only be treated of between God and his people."

8. **The voice.** MURPHY: "By a beautiful figure these signs are described as having a voice, because they speak to the people of the presence and power of his messenger." We may add, because, also, as symbols, they spoke of the deliverance which that messenger had come to achieve.

9 voice of the latter sign. And it shall be if they believe not even these two signs, and hearken not to thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour on

9. **If they believe not even these two signs.** God provides against every possible misgiving in the mind of Moses, and every possible contingency of the future. His mercy provides his messenger with not one or two, but three miraculous signs, any one of which should have been sufficient. The messengers of God are ever accompanied by ample proofs of their divine legation.

Take of the water of the river and pour it on the dry ground. This is the form the miracle was to assume when presented to the Israelites; when wrought before Pharaoh, it had a far more terrible form, Ex. 7: 14-25. The river was the Nile. KURTZ: "The third sign belonged to a totally different sphere. It is clearly and expressly separated and distinguished from the other two. Moreover, it was not manifested on this occasion, even to the eyes of Moses; it could only be seen in Egypt. Moses was directed, in the event of the people disbelieving the first two signs, to take some water out of the Nile and pour it upon the earth, where it would be turned to blood. The reason that in this instance Moses only received a command and a promise, and that the sign was not actually accomplished before his eyes, is not to be sought in the fact that there was no water near. The whole force of the sign depended on the water being taken from the Nile. To enter fully into the meaning of this sign, we must remember what the Nile was to the Egyptians. It was the source of all the wealth and fertility of the land of Egypt, and was therefore worshipped as a god. With the same rod which God had placed in the hand of Moses that he might tend and lead the Israelites, he was also to overthrow the gods of Egypt, and demonstrate their utter weakness in comparison to the power of the God which he worshipped. That which brought a blessing to Egypt was turned by Moses into a curse; and that which had been the object of worship was made an object of disgust and abhorrence. Moses was first of all to show to his people that he possessed this power, by taking a handful of water out of the Nile; but to Pharaoh he was to demonstrate that God was in earnest in his determination to smite the gods of Egypt, by corrupting the whole of the river."

The same writer continues: "Thus did God furnish his servant with three signs. They were all related, each in its own way, to the work which he had to perform. The number *three* is the mark of perfection and completeness, an indication that the process of development is at an end, and that the idea embodied is fully manifested. Hence the three miraculous signs were proofs that the miraculous power of God would be put forth in all its fulness through the instrumentality of Moses. A fourth sign Israel could not and durst not demand without convicting itself of obdurate unbelief. But, in this case, it was necessary that with the triple sign there should also be progress and a culminating point in the manifestation of the idea. There were three objects upon which the power of God was to be exerted: *Moses*, who was appointed to be the leader and shepherd of Israel; the *people of Israel*, who were to be cleansed from their leprosy, and made a holy, priestly nation; and *Egypt*, which was now to discover the impotence of its gods. There was a special sign, containing a distinct intimation for each of these; and thus the idea was actually exhibited in the whole course of its development. Even the order in which the signs occurred is thus shown to have been both significant and necessary. No other order would have harmonized with the natural development of the idea."

Moses now advanced the fourth objection. He was not eloquent. Perhaps, in his modesty and his anxiety to escape the commission of God, he overstated his defect. We are assured by Stephen that at the court of Pharaoh he had been distinguished for might in words, Acts 7: 22. The statement may refer, however, to the distinction of Moses as a writer rather than as a speaker; his books bear the marks of careful culture in the art of composition, both of prose and poetry. And many persons who write with perspicuity and elegance, lack fluency of speech. In any case, whatever may have been the natural endowment of Moses as a speaker, forty years of desert life, during which his powers were probably asleep, would make him a slow and hesitating speaker of the Egyptian language, which he had so long since disused. And the miraculous presence and power of God, Moses says in ver. 10, did not remedy the defect. In answer, God promised, vers. 11, 12, to work the miracle at whose necessity Moses had hinted.

The fifth objection was then brought forward. All the reasons of Moses are answered, and there remains only his stubborn determination to avoid the task assigned him. KURTZ: "When at length his fears are all exhausted, and he has no more excuses left, we expect to find him yield. But no; hitherto his refusal has been conditional; now it is unconditional. How unexpected and improbable does this turn *appear*; yet how true and necessary it really *is*! So long as the refusal of the flesh could give reasons for its opposition to the demands of the spirit, it appeared to be somewhat justifiable. And an inexperienced observer might fancy that as soon as every doubt had been removed, the

the dry ground, and the water which thou takest from the river shall become blood on the dry ground.

27 And Jehovah said to Aaron: Go into the wilderness to

will would yield itself captive, that, in fact it could not do anything else. But whoever has looked into the dark recesses of the human heart, knows well that it is there that the most severe and violent opposition commences, namely, the opposition of capriciousness and self-will. *I cannot* then comes forward openly and without reserve in its true character, as an unvarnished *I will not.*"

At this display of disobedience the voice of God became stern, ver. 14. KURTZ: "Hitherto, when all that had been said was, 'I cannot,' the mercy of God replied to the objection with inexhaustible long-suffering and patience. But now it meets the insolent 'I will not,' with a determined 'thou shalt;' and this is the moment of decision." But the voice even in its sternness was one of mercy. Moses had declined the supernatural help proposed in vers. 11, 12; God therefore offered him a natural help whose value it required no special faith to appreciate, vers. 14–16. Moses missed by his stubbornness the distinction for miraculous eloquence which might have been his; and he was constrained to obey notwithstanding his reluctance. We have nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by resistance to the divine will.

The fault of Moses lay not in his modesty, but in his want of confidence in God's aid, and in his stubborn indisposition to obey when all difficulties had been removed from his way. KURTZ: "A certain amount of enthusiasm, which is sometimes regarded as inspiration, the confidence of self-assurance, a superabundance of power, insensibility to difficulties, and the boldness which rushes headlong into dangers, all these befit the hero of this world. But for men who are to do the work of God, the heroes who are to fight in his cause, not only are they unsuitable, but they actually disqualify them for their vocation. Forty years before, Moses possessed them all in rich abundance. But at that time God found him unfitted for the work he was destined to perform. Modesty and circumspection, humility and self-abasement, consciousness of one's own weakness and insufficiency are the indispensable conditions of all employment in the kingdom of God, for they are the vehicles of divine inspiration and wisdom, of divine power and strength. Therefore it is that the apostle says: 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' 2 Cor. 12: 10. To this meekness Moses had been trained in the desert school. But the perverseness of human nature was again manifested in the fact, that even in this he went to the extreme. He overstepped the boundary between negative weakness, which renounces all self-confidence, and that positive weakness which not only renounces all self-confidence, but cherishes a want of confidence in God. Thus he went from one extreme to the very opposite. But the discipline of God can reclaim a man from his wandering to the right, just as well as when he wanders to the left."

It was a providential circumstance that the opposition of Moses was overcome at the very beginning of his mission. KURTZ: "We may see how necessary it was that all the weakness and faint-heartedness, the incredulity and unbelief, which Moses displayed, should be brought out and overcome before he entered upon his mission, when we consider how serious and dangerous the slightest manifestation of it at a later period would have been, whether in the presence of Pharaoh or of the people. Then the reproach of Moses would have become the reproach of God, and his fall would have ruined his work. It was necessary that he should stand before God weak and faint-hearted, despairing and of little faith, in order that he might be strengthened by God and stand firm before Pharaoh and the people, as a divine hero possessed of undoubted courage and unshaken confidence."

The return of Moses to Jethro, from whom he prudently withholds his reason for desiring to visit Egypt; his departure; the circumcision of his child, and some further instructions concerning his mission, fill the interval of vers. 18–26, after which our lesson is resumed. His family was sent back to Jethro, Ex. 18: 2, probably at once after the circumcision of his son. His journey would have been delayed too long had he waited for the healing of his child. They had probably made but one day's journey, so that the family could easily return in time for the necessary illness of the child to take place at home.

27. **Aaron.** The most probable meaning of the name is *the enlightener;* but all the proposed derivations are merely conjectural. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the eldest son of the Levite, Amram, by Jochebed, Ex. 6: 20; 7: 7; Num. 26: 59. Miriam, the sister, was older than he; for he was but three years older than Moses, Ex. 7: 7, while she was enough older to take part in the rescue of her brother, Ex. 2: 4, 7, 8. His existence is first recognized in the Scriptures in connection with the events of the present lesson, ver. 14. During the exile of Moses he had married, and became the father of four sons; Phinehas, his grandson, was also born during this interval, Ex. 6: 23–25. According to the promise of God, he served as the spokesman of Moses, and almost never ventured to act on his own responsibility. He seems to have been a man of words rather than deeds; and he was

meet Moses. And he went, and fell in with him in the
28 mountain of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron
all the words of Jehovah, who had sent him, and all the
29 signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and
Aaron went, and gathered all the elders of the sons of

therefore fitted for his subordinate but important position. His nature was affectionate and yielding, ver. 14; and while he was thus adapted to his place as the instrument of Moses, he was also led into temptation during the absence of his stronger brother, having no power to resist the clamors of the sinful people, Ex. 32. The same easy-going affection seems to have made him a partisan of his sister in her opposition to Moses, Num. 12, and at a later date the associate of Moses in the sin for which they both died. He was ever ready to ask forgiveness when he had offended, Num. 12 : 11. His amiability, his sweetness, his quick sympathies, and his eloquence, must have endeared him to the people, whom, nevertheless, he was unfitted to govern, since he lacked profound conviction and stern decision, Ex. 32. His proper position was that in which he was placed, under the shelter of his greater brother. With Hur he was on the hill with Moses, assisting to uphold his hands during the battle of Rephidim, Ex. 17 : 10-12. He was appointed the first High Priest of Israel, and the office was made hereditary in his family through the eldest sons in succession, Ex. 29 ; and to his other male descendants the lesser office of the ordinary priesthood was given. His two eldest sons, however, were struck dead for disgraceful conduct in the priestly office, Lev. 10 : 1-11, and the High Priesthood descended to Eleazer, his next son, Num. 30 : 23-29 ; and through him to Phinehas, his first born grandson, Num. 25. When Korah and his associates rebelled against him and his sons, as well as against Moses, and were smitten with pestilence, it was he who, at the command of Moses, rushed with his censer between the living and the dead, and so arrested the plague, Num. 16. His divine appointment to the High Priesthood was subsequently attested by the budding of his rod, Num. 17. He was not permitted to enter the promised land, but died in his 123d year on Mount Hor. See on Num. 21 : 4. On the first day of the month Ab, the Jews still hold a fast in commemoration of his death.

McCLINTOCK AND STRONG : "Aaron was a type of Christ, not in his personal, but in his official character : 1. As High Priest offering sacrifice ; 2. In entering into the holy place on the great day of Atonement, and reconciling the people to God and making intercession for them, and pronouncing upon them the blessing of Jehovah at the termination of the solemn service ; 3. In being anointed with the holy oil of effusion, which was prefigurative of the Holy Spirit with which our Lord was endowed ; 4. In bearing the names of all the tribes of Israel upon his breast and upon his shoulders, thus presenting them always before God and representing them to him ; 5. In being the medium of their inquiring by Urim and Thummim, and the communication of God's will to them. But, though the offices of Aaron were typical, the priesthood of Christ is of a far higher order. Aaron's priesthood was designed as 'a shadow of heavenly things,' to lead the Israelites to look forward to 'better things to come,' when 'another priest' should arise, 'after the order of Melchisedek,' Heb. 6 : 20, and who should 'be constituted, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.'"

Go into the wilderness. The direction is explicit, as had Aaron gone to the home of Jethro to seek his brother, his journey would have been fruitless. While God prepared Moses to meet Aaron, he prepared Aaron to seek Moses. "All things work together" to accomplish the divine purposes. It is possible that the refuge of Moses was known to Aaron and perhaps to other Israelites. But that Aaron journeyed at the suggestion of the leading Israelites who had drawn up plans of escape from Egypt and desired to place Moses at the head of the enterprise, is a fancy opposed to the whole tenor of the history of the Exodus.

In the mountain of God. See on Ex. 3 : 1. Horeb lies on the most direct route between Sherm and Egypt. The meeting of the brothers here therefore favors the supposition that Sherm was the home of Jethro.

And kissed him. An oriental mode of salutation, especially among relatives. Here also it was a characteristic action of the warm-hearted and impulsive brother. It is mentioned because it cheered and encouraged Moses, especially as a fulfilment of God's words, ver. 14.

28. And Moses told, etc. Aaron needed not to see the signs in order to be convinced. He yielded at once, with characteristic facility, to the impressions produced by the words of Moses.

29. Moses and Aaron went. We are now immediately transported to Egypt.

The elders. This term is sometimes employed in the Bible as a designation of household or civil officers in general, Gen. 1 : 7 ; 2 Sam. 12 : 17 ; Ezek. 27 : 9. Sometimes it is used to designate men to whom great respect was paid, whether officers or not, Gen. 50 : 7. It is usually employed,

30 Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the eyes of the
31 people. And the people believed: and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the sons of Israel, and had seen their afflictions, they bent their heads and bowed down.

however, to designate a particular class of civil rulers, who were found not only among the Hebrews, but also among the Moabites and Midianites, Num. 22: 7. The name in this sense had its origin in the patriarchal age, when the father, who was the eldest man of the household or clan, governed it, and when the eldest son succeeded to his authority. It is probable that the office was modified in the later development of the Israelitish government, but we know nothing as to the nature of any modifications. The elders were not identical with the heads of tribes, but are distinguished from these, Deut. 29: 9. It is probable that while the heads of tribes were nobles by birth, the elders were elevated to their rank on account of their wisdom, prudence, and experience. They always appear as the representatives of the people, as in this lesson, and Ex. 3: 16, 18; 12: 21; 17: 5, 6; 18: 12; 19: 7; 24: 1, 9, 14, so much so that *elders* and *people* are occasionally used as equivalent terms, comp. Josh. 24: 1 with 2, 19, 21; 1 Sam. 8: 4 with 7, 10, 19. Their authority extended to all matters which concerned the public welfare: nor did the people question their acts even when they disapproved of them, Josh. 9: 18; hence it is inferred that they were appointed by a free popular election. Thus they formed to a certain extent a democratic element in an otherwise aristocratic constitution. Moses selected from them his assistants in the administration of affairs, Ex. 24: 1; Num. 11: 16, 17. They accompanied Moses in all his great transactions, Ex. 19: 7; Deut. 31: 9; Ex. 17: 5. We find the order in existence through every period of Israelitish history, to the Christian era. In the New Testament the elders take action in all public affairs; and as one of the governing classes, a part of the Sanhedrim are chosen from it.

30. **Aaron spoke.** According to the arrangement of vers. 15, 16. Thus Moses, the stranger, was introduced to the people by one whom they well knew.

Did the signs. At the command of Moses. The agency of Aaron in working miracles soon ceased; and we hear but little more of it. His office of interpreter and prophet to Moses seems also to have ceased, as Moses himself acquired more confidence and, perhaps, regained the facility of speech in the Egyptian language which he had used but little during forty years.

The people. It is probable that they are considered to have been present in their representatives, ver. 29. For a similar usage see Josh. 24: 1, compared with 2, 19, 21; 1 Sam. 8: 4, compared with 7, 10, 19. It is possible, however, that an assemblage of such of the people as could leave their tasks was called together by the elders.

31. **Believed.** As God had promised, Ex. 3: 18.

Bent their heads and bowed down. Oriental attitudes of worship.

Worshipped. The idea that they worshipped Moses and Aaron may be mentioned as one of the curiosities of interpretation. They had not yet lost the knowledge of the true God, though they had been guilty of idolatry. The revival noticed in Ex. 3: 9 still exerted its influence; and the people are affected to learn that their prayers are answered.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. God has patiently answered in his word all the difficulties which the soul can find in the path of duty, vers. 1-9.

2. Usually our objections to God's will arise from our indisposition to do it, ver. 13. If we loved duty, there would be no difficulty in the way of its performance.

3. It will be made apparent at the last day that the reluctance of the impenitent to obey God has arisen not from the real difficulties in the path of obedience, but from their stubborn opposition to the divine will; and then they will meet the anger which they have merited, ver. 14.

4. God is able and willing to overcome not only the impediments to duty which arise from our conscious unfitness for his service, but also those which arise from our native opposition to his will. Let us, therefore, take our hearts to him, with all their stubbornness, and ask him to subdue them to himself, vers. 13, 14.

5. God is angry with our stubborn sins, ver. 14.

6. If in this life God exhibits his anger towards us, and sends us afflictions, it is only that he may so discipline us that we may turn to him and escape eternal suffering. Thus his anger and his love are one.

LESSON V.—JEHOVAH'S PROMISE. CHAP. 6 : 1-8.

1 AND Jehovah said to Moses : Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh ; for through a strong hand shall he send them, and through a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

7. Happy is it for those who in this life fear the anger of God and turn from sin that they may escape his anger hereafter, ver. 14.

8. Those who excuse themselves from religious duty because they have no gifts of speech forget that the grace of God, aiding our efforts for self-culture, can remedy the defect, vers. 10-12.

9. When God calls us to any duty we should be confident that he will provide for us while we perform it, vers. 1-9.

10. Those whom God calls to the ministry should yield at once, ver. 14.

11. Difficulties in the path of duty, when boldly confronted, turn to advantages, vers. 2-4.

12. When God sends the message of the gospel to the world he prepares the hearts of men to receive it, ver. 31. The teacher should, therefore, take courage.

13. The strength of that weakness which leans upon God and gains his gracious promise, vers. 1-9, 27-31 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 10.

14. The promises of God are sure, vers. 27, 31, notes.

15. The boastfulness and self-confidence of a worldly hero contrasted with the humility of a Christian hero, vers. 1-9.

16. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, vers. 27-31; Ps. 133 : 1.

17. The evidences of Christianity from miracles, vers. 2-4, notes.

After gaining the Israelites to their purpose, Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and demanded, not that he should liberate the people, but that he should give them permission to go three days into the wilderness to hold a religious feast. The demand did not strike Pharaoh as strange, for the Egyptians were accustomed to make similar pilgrimages to secluded places for the performance of religious rites. Nor did he recognize in it a stratagem to escape from his authority. In fact, it was not presented as a deception ; it was made in good faith ; for God begins by presenting to us first those duties which are easiest, and afterward, as we are able to perform them, the harder. Thus he dealt in mercy with Pharaoh. Had the monarch yielded to this small request, he would probably have gained grace to yield when the next and harder demand was made ; and thus he would have saved his kingdom from the terrible plagues which his obstinacy brought upon it, and himself from the fearful death which he at last suffered. God foresaw, however, that he would refuse this mild and reasonable demand, together with the harder ones to follow. Instead of letting the people go, he only increased their tasks and the severity of their punishments. These severities were providentially designed to wean them more perfectly from Egypt, and perhaps to prepare them for the hardships of the desert ; but at present, in the weakness of their faith, they turn against Moses and Aaron as the authors of their misery. Even Moses was cast into doubt by the apparent failure of his mission, Ex. 5 : 22, 23.

Hence in the chapter from which the present lesson is taken, God encourages Moses and Aaron, by a repetition of the promises and almost the words which he had uttered from the burning bush, Ex. 3 : 4. As the same doubts had arisen in the mind of Moses, the same arguments are used again to allay them. We do not know how long an interval elapsed between the failure of Moses and his renewed activity, but it seems to have been of several weeks duration, long enough for the people throughout Egypt to be wearied out with severities.

1. **Jehovah said.** He spoke from the burning bush in an audible voice. But how were these later communications made? It has been lately maintained that the mind of Moses was deeply impressed with the message, and that God ordinarily used no other means of communication with his servant. But from Num. 12 : 6-8 it is probable that the communications of God to Moses were uniformly vocal. His method of communicating with others is also described in the same passage.

Now. In the very height of Pharaoh's pride and insolence, and in the depths of your discouragement. The preliminary warning has been given ; the battle at once begins.

Shalt thou see. Be not disappointed ; wait ; the result is assured.

Through a strong hand. That is, *through the instrumentality of a strong hand, compelled by a strong hand.* The almighty hand of God, manifested in terrible judgments, is referred to. God is said

2 And God spoke to Moses, and said to him: I am
3 Jehovah. And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to
Jacob as God, Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I
4 not known to them. And also I established my covenant
with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of

to have a hand only figuratively; since the hand is the member through which man chiefly manifests his strength. As a parent accommodates his language to the capacities of his little child, so God conforms in his speech to our methods of conception.

Shall he drive them. Not merely willing, but anxious to yield, and urging and aiding the escape which he now forbids.

2. **God spoke to Moses.** This formula is here repeated probably because an interval of silence had intervened between the words of the preceding verse and those of the present verse, marking the communication about to be delivered as distinct from the former.

I am Jehovah. The one who appeared in the Mount of God, Ex. 3 : 13, 14, and conversed with you about the meaning of my name. MURPHY: "The Real, the Self-existent, the Author of all other existence, manifesting my being by my presence in and power over nature for the performance of my long-revealed purpose. This is a name of power and hope to cheer the darkest heart."

3. **God, Almighty.** The essential deity and the omnipotence of God constituted the sum of that which the patriarchs knew of him.

By my name Jehovah was I not known to them. These words have been supposed to prove that *Jehovah* is a later appellation of the deity, unknown to the earliest ages, that the name had its origin in the Mosaic age, and that it was used by Moses in writing the history of earlier ages merely because it was an ordinary and endeared name of God, and without any idea of teaching that it had been known to the patriarchs. This view is untenable, for the following reasons: 1. The form of the Hebrew word for Jehovah was already antique in the time of Moses. 2. The name Jehovah is in constant use along with that of Elohim, in the earliest books of the Bible, not merely where the author speaks, but also where the patriarchs are introduced as speaking. 3. The word, with its sacred meaning, enters into the formation of proper names which were conferred before the Mosaic period, as Moriah, *the shown of Jehovah*, Gen. 22 : 14, Jehovah Jireh, *Jehovah will see* or *provide*, Gen. 22 : 14; and Jochebed, *the glory of Jehovah*, Ex. 6 : 20.

The difficulty is easily solved by a reference to the idea which the Israelites attached to the name of God. By *the name of God*, they meant not merely his appellation, but *his revealed character as expressed by the appellation* or by some other means. Thus OLSHAUSEN on Matt. 18 ; 19: "The *name* is the personality, the essential being, and that not in its state of not recognizing, or not being recognized, but in its manifestation." NITZSCH: "God's name is the revelation and presence of God in his word and in his church." MEYER: "To be named by God, and according to God's will, is not only as much as, but more than *to be*; it is the unveiling of the Being." DE WETTE: "God's name is not merely his appellation, which we speak with the mouth, but also and principally the idea which we attach to it, his Being so far as it is revealed and known." ALFORD: "The 'Name of God' in Scripture is used to signify that revelation of himself which he has made to men, which is all that we know of him." See Ps. 99 : 3; 101 : 9; Isai. 63 : 4, 6, 12; Rev. 14 : 1. When we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we refer not merely to the word *Father*, but to the revealed character of which it is the verbal sign. With this idea the difficulty of the passage before us disappears. God was known to the patriarchs by his attribute of power. But though they used the name Jehovah, they did not understand its full meaning. God was known to them as El or Elohim, *the mighty*, which expressed his power; the meaning of that name they appreciated; but the word Jehovah, which was designed to express his eternal being of beneficent activity in the interests of his people, they did not interpret; God was not known by it, for it conveyed no proper idea of his character. Read carefully also the notes on Ex. 3 : 4.

4. **Also.** Not only does my nature, revealed in the name Jehovah, incline me to the course of mercy towards Israel, but my covenant binds me to it.

Established. Therefore it cannot fail.

My covenant. The covenant of God is his promise of blessing. It may be in the form of a mutual agreement between him and the recipients of his grace; or it may be without such an agreement, as in Gen. 9 : 8-11. It may be suspended on a condition, as was the first covenant with Adam in Eden, and the covenant of the Old Dispensation, Heb. 8 : 9; or it may be absolute, Heb. 7 : 20-22. The covenant of God with the patriarchs was based on his foreknowledge that they would walk in his commandments, Gen. 18 : 17-19, Conant's Revision, and he here regards their part of it as having been fulfilled, and his part as therefore necessarily to be fulfilled.

6 their sojournings, in which they sojourned; and I have
heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, whom the Egyp-
tians cause to serve; and I remember my covenant.
6 Therefore say to the sons of Israel: I am Jehovah, and I
will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyp-
tians, and deliver you from their service, and redeem you
7 with an arm stretched out, and with great judgments; and
I will take you to me for a people, and will be to you a

The land of Canaan. See on Ex. 3 : 8. An appellation derived from the name of Ham's fourth son, Gen. 10 : 6; 1 Chron. 1 : 8, whose descendants constituted a large part of the inhabitants of Palestine, Gen. 10 : 15–19; 1 Chron. 1 : 13–16. The name, as applied in the text, denotes the country now known as Palestine in the strictest sense, lying between the Mediterranean on the west, and the Dead Sea and the Jordan on the east. It is sometimes specially opposed to the "land of Gilead," the high table-land on the east of the Jordan, Num. 32 : 26–32; Josh. 22 : 32. See also Gen. 12 : 5; 23 : 2, 19; 31 : 18; 33 : 18; 35 : 6; 37 : 1; 48 : 3, 7; 49 : 30; Num. 13 : 2, 17; 33 : 40, 51; Josh. 21 : 2, 12. The name, which means *low, humbled*, was applied to the country, simply with reference to the progenitor of its people, and not because it was a low land. In later times, however, it seems to have been used with some reference to its meaning, and applied to the maritime plains of Philistia and Phœnicia, Zeph. 2 : 5; Matt. 15 : 22; comp. Mark 7 : 26. The name *Kanana land* occurs frequently on the Egyptian monuments. The land thus proffered the enslaved children of Israel was proverbial for its productiveness, for the variety of its climates, and for the beauty of its scenery; the prospect of its possession should have stirred the hearts of those to whom it was presented. But no great impression was made, Ex. 6 : 9.

In which they sojourned. The object of God in calling the patriarchs to lead a pilgrim life in Palestine was probably to separate them, by their migration, from their kindred in Mesopotamia, who were fast falling into idolatry, Gen. 31 : 19, 30–35, to keep them by their changeful tent life from such intimacy with the idolatrous Canaanites as would have followed a settled residence among them, and to cultivate a habit of faith in the divine promise and providence.

5. **And I have heard.** Three grounds of encouragement and assurance are offered to Moses. (1) The character of God as revealed in the name Jehovah, vers. 2, 3. (2) The covenant of God with the fathers, ver. 4, and (3) The special compassion of God for his suffering people, ver. 5.

And remember. Here again God accommodates his language to human modes of thought. It was now the exact time upon which God had before fixed for the fulfilment of his covenant, Gen. 15 : 13–16. He had seemed to forget his people; he now seemed to remember them. All things were ready for its fulfilment; the cruelties of the Egyptians had exhausted the divine patience, the Israelites longed for deliverance, the leader was fully prepared for his task, the iniquity of the Canaanites was full.

6. **Say....I am Jehovah.** Moses was directed to teach the children of Israel the significance of this name, and the divine characteristics which it expresses.

I will bring you out. He was also to repeat the gracious promise of deliverance, of whose fulfilment the characteristics of God which are expressed in the name *Jehovah* were the pledge.

An arm stretched out. Canon COOK: "The figure is common and quite intelligible; it may have struck Moses and the people the more forcibly since they were familiar with the hieroglyphic which represents *might* by two outstretched arms. On the obelisk at Heliopolis, Moses had been from infancy familiar with the symbol in the official name of Osertasen Racheperka, *i.e. Ra is might.*"

Great judgments. The Egyptian plagues which followed.

7. **I will take you to me for a people.** The figure seems to be that of adoption. It shows us the Father placing his arms around the alien child, and taking it into the fellowship of home. Nothing could more comfort the Israelites, who had often been tempted to feel that God had cast them off.

Will be to you a God. While God governed all nations, he manifested himself peculiarly in Israel.

Ye shall know. By practical experience of my mercy. MURPHY: "To know by personal observation is the primitive meaning of the Hebrew verb *know*."

God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyp-
8 tians. And I will bring you into the land which I lifted up my hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and will give it to you as a possession, I, Jehovah.

That I am Jehovah. That I am all which the name signifies. See on Ex. 3 : 4.

Your God. Yours in a special sense.

From under the burdens. The suffering Israelites are presented by the figure of one staggering wearily under heavy loads.

8. **And I will bring you.** A repetition of the promise of ver. 4. What God told Moses for his comfort, Moses was to tell his people.

Which I lifted up my hand. The uplifting of the hand was the action of one who took a judicial oath. See Gen. 14 : 22. Hence the meaning is, *which I swore.*

Will give it to you. The oath made to the patriarchs shall be fulfilled to you.

As a possession. The fathers only sojourned in it without possessing it; ye shall dwell in it as in your own land.

I, Jehovah. I, whose significant name of Jehovah is an assurance of my purpose; see on ver. 3. The rendering of the Common Version, *I am the Lord*, is irrelevant.

Moses was obedient to the divine direction. But the people hearkened not. Canon Cook: "The contrast between the reception of this communication and that recorded in Ex. 4 : 31, is distinctly accounted for by the change of circumstances. On the former occasion the people were comparatively at ease, accustomed to their lot, sufficiently afflicted to long for deliverance, and sufficiently free in spirit to hope for it." They are not said to have railed at Moses; their sorrow was too deep for even this; it had rendered them insensate to hope. God reiterated his message to Pharaoh; but Moses was greatly discouraged at his want of success in his previous efforts, vers. 12, 29, 30. Nevertheless he obeyed again, Ex. 7 : 6, and now with the commission to work a miracle in the presence of the monarch, Ex. 7 : 9. The miracle, though it did not affect the stubborn heart of Pharaoh, must have cheered Moses and Aaron, as an evidence that God was indeed with them.

Having now given Pharaoh warning upon warning, and having confirmed the warnings with a great sign, Ex. 7 : 10-12, and having still found the heart of the tyrant obdurate, God resorts to more decisive measures.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Those who will not yield to God's mercies, must at last yield to his judgments, ver. 1.
2. The name Jehovah as suggestive of a Being who is eternally active in behalf of his people, vers. 2, 3.
3. The gradual progress of revelation, ver. 3.
4. The covenant-keeping God, ver. 4. Has he a covenant with us? What are its conditions?
5. What is the land of Canaan which God now covenants to give his people? Canaan was a type of heaven. Consider (1) The pilgrimage by which it was reached, (2) The abundance of its delights, (3) Its perpetuity as the possession of the chosen people, and (4) The special manifestation of God in it, ver. 4.
6. No groan escapes the ear of God, ver. 5.
7. Those who persecute the children of God cannot escape punishment, ver. 6.
8. It is better to be a persecuted Christian, than a persecuting enemy of God, vers. 6, 7.
9. God has still a chosen people, whom he loves and protects, ver. 7. Are you one of them?
10. Those who trust in God learn by a sweet experience that their trust is not in vain; ver. 7, *ye shall know.*
11. Heaven is assured to God's people by his oath, ver. 8; Heb. 6 : 13-20.

LESSON VI.—THE FIRST PLAGUE. CHAP. 7 : 14-22.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFLICT IN EGYPT.

MURPHY: "To understand the deep import of the conflict before us, let us bear in mind that now for the first time since the dispersion of mankind the opposition between the children of God and the children of disobedience is coming out into broad daylight. Egypt, that was the kind fosterer of the chosen family, has now become the persecutor of Israel, and the avowed antagonist of God. The

present struggle is therefore no raid for the gathering of booty, nor encounter between two rival nations, nor expedition for the selfish ends of an earthly ambition. It is the controversy between light and darkness, in which the God of heaven and earth manifests his presence and power on behalf of his people and against the defiant nation. This nation is for the time being the representative of all heathendom, which is the kingdom of the prince of darkness; and the battle now fought is the model and type of all future warfare between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Hence it rises to a transcendent importance in the ways of God with man, and fitly holds a place even in the preface to the ten commandments, Ex. 20 : 2." KURTZ : "The contest was essentially a war on the part of Jehovah against the Gods of Egypt." And as the Egyptian Gods were the most celebrated in the world, their discomfiture was to be the discomfiture of the heathen gods in general. It is probable also that the idols and temples and magicians of Egypt were connected with a spiritual realm of sin by which they were used for the deception of men, Acts 16 : 16; 1 Cor. 10 : 20, 21. The plagues of Egypt were therefore a defeat of Satan and his angels in the nation over which they exercised most perfect control. See Ex. 12 : 12.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLAGUES.

The first plague was directed against the Nile, one of the Egyptian deities, adored as a source of life, not only to the produce of the land but to its inhabitants. This object of adoration was conquered by Jehovah and turned into an object of abhorrence. The second plague, that of the frogs, struck also at the idolatry of Egypt; for the frog was an object of worship. The third plague turned the land, which was worshipped, into a source of torment; the dust produced a curse. If, as the Common Version renders the original, the curse was that of lice, as is quite probable, the priests were defiled and unfitted for their tasks; for they were compelled to take singular precautions to avoid this source of contamination. The fourth plague consisted in the torment of either flies of a ravenous disposition, or beetles: the original is in doubt. If the former, then the air, which was worshipped, as were the river and the land, was turned into a source of exquisite annoyance. If the latter, then the beetle, one of the most common of the Egyptian idols, swarmed with voracious appetite, attacking even man, as the Egyptian beetle still does, and inflicting painful wounds. The fifth plague, that of murrain, struck at the cattle-worship for which Egypt was celebrated. The sixth plague, produced by the ashes scattered toward heaven, in conformity with an ancient Egyptian rite, as if in invocation of the sun-god, one of the chief deities, continued the warfare of Jehovah upon Egyptian idolatry: the religious ceremony which was employed to invoke blessing brought disease; and even the priests, whose cleanliness was rigidly enforced, were not exempt, but were defiled with putrid boils. Ex. 9 : 11. The seventh plague, beginning a new series, seems to have been aimed, like those which followed, to demonstrate the power of Jehovah over all the elements, and even life itself, in contrast with the impotence of the idols. The gods were vanquished; God had his triumph. The storm and the hail came at his bidding. The locusts appeared and departed at his word. The sun itself was veiled at his command. Nay, the angel of death was held and loosed by his hand alone. The tenth plague had an immediate relation to idolatry, since it destroyed not only the first-born of man, but the first-born of beast; so that the sacred animals in the temples were touched by a Power higher than those they were supposed to represent. The victory was complete; upon all the gods of Egypt Jehovah had executed judgment, Ex. 12 : 12. Perhaps also in some of the plagues we may trace a judicial reference to the suffering of the Israelites; the bloody river brings to mind the Hebrew infants who had perished in it; and the death-wail of the paschal night seems but an echo of the lamentations of Hebrew mothers bereft of their children. The whole series was but a just retribution for the tyranny of Egypt; and it fortunately so far weakened the Egyptian power and terrified the Egyptian heart that after crossing the Red Sea Israel was not molested in the wilderness by further pursuit. And the intelligence, preceding the chosen people, created a fear, favorable to their interests, as they advanced upon Palestine, Josh. 9 : 9.

THE RELATION OF THE PLAGUES TO THE NATURAL PHENOMENA OF EGYPT.

KURTZ : "A closer acquaintance with the physical condition of Egypt has shown that the plagues which preceded the deliverance of Israel were plagues peculiar to the country, and that they frequently occur there, though never in the same force or to the same extent as on the occasion before us." We have seen in the notes that the first plague was probably connected with the annual overflow of the Nile and the minute infusoria and cryptogams which abound in the water. The subsidence of the inundation is always immediately followed by an excessive production of frogs. It is probable that the unusual condition of the water during the inundation, its abundance of infusoria, and its putridity, would tend to produce an unusual number of these pests. Even to-day they amount to a plague in September, and but for the Ibis, which rapidly consumes them, the land would be filled with stench from their dead bodies, such as is described in Ex. 8 : 14. The vitiation of the atmosphere from the carcasses of fishes and frogs would tend to the production of vermin of various sorts, and of disease like the murrain in the cattle and the boils and the final pestilence which afflicted the Egyptians. Perhaps also the hail-storm and the darkness may have been connected with the remarkable climatic

conditions which affected the river in the first and second plagues. The third plague consisted in the production of either musquitoes or lice: the original word is doubtful. The former usually appear in October, after the departure of the frogs. But it is more probable that we are to understand the lice which are peculiar to Egypt, and the abundance of which every traveller has learned to his sorrow. Sir Samuel Baker in describing them uses almost Scriptural language: "It is as though the very dust were turned into lice." The fourth plague consisted of either dog-flies or beetles; the original word being still a matter of discussion. The dog-fly of Egypt is at some seasons a far worse plague than the musquito. "Coming in immense swarms," says Canon COOK, "they cover all objects in black and loathsome masses, and attack every exposed part of the traveller's person with incredible pertinacity. The bite is exceedingly sharp and painful, causing severe inflammation, especially in the eyelids." The beetle also abounds at times, inflicting painful bites and consuming all sorts of materials. The third and fourth plagues are the only ones concerning which we are uncertain. The fifth plague, that of murrain, has been inflicted upon Egypt in recent times, in 1842, 1863, and 1866, when nearly all the herds were destroyed. The boils which constituted the sixth plague are still illustrated by the severe cutaneous eruptions prevalent in the valley of the Nile, some of which closely resemble those described in Exodus. The seventh plague, that of hail accompanied by thunder and lightning, contrary to the popular impression, is not unknown in Egypt; the storm of Ex. 9 was remarkable, however, for its severity; see ver. 18. This storm occurred about the middle of February, the very season at which hail-storms now visit Egypt, when the flax is in blossom, and the barley is in the ear, Ex. 9: 31. The eighth plague is dreaded by the Egyptians as the most terrible of all scourges; and many modern travellers have seen the whole country covered with locusts. The ninth plague, that of darkness, has also its analogy in the phenomena of Egypt. After the vernal equinox the prevailing wind is from the southwestern desert. It blows at intervals for some fifty days; and the usual duration of each gale is two or three days. Coming from the desert, it bears masses of fine sand, which occasion a darkness deeper than that of the worst English fogs. During the prevalence of the gale the inhabitants shut themselves up in their dwellings; and even the beasts hide themselves. The air is so filled with the sand that artificial light is of but little use; the atmosphere has lost its transparency. The tenth plague, though administered by a destroying angel, Heb. 11: 28, has its analogy in the pestilence which is expressly said to have destroyed 70,000 Israelites in the reign of David, under the direction of an angel, 2 Sam. 24: 13, 25, and in the modern plague, which has not infrequently visited Egypt. In what, then, consisted the miraculous character of these plagues? 1. There was a miracle in the prediction of each one, and in its occurrence at the command of Moses. 2. Their intensity was miraculous. 3. The remarkable succession of ten in a single year sufficiently severe to cripple the power of Egypt proves them miraculous. 4. The exemption of the Israelites from the most severe of the plagues marks them as produced and guided by the divine power. 5. The remarkable intelligence which administered the last plague so that it smote only the first-born of man and beast, proves the presence of God in its operation. 6. The cessation of each plague at the intercession of Moses marks it as a miracle. It is instructive to trace the analogy of the plagues, with the phenomena of Egypt; for, 1. This analogy proves the account to be veritable history; no myth and no romance originating in Palestine could so completely preserve the coloring of Egypt from beginning to end. 2. It shows us that God is the ruler of nature. The idolatry of Egypt, as of all ancient heathendom, was the deification of nature; each god represented originally some object or force of the universe; the sun, the moon, the principle of life, the dawn, the winds, were symbolized by the idols of antiquity. It was the purpose of God to assert his power over all these creatures of his hand and these forces of his realm; such is his express declaration through Moses, Ex. 9: 29. We still need the lesson; for there are those who teach that God stands afar from nature, exerting no control over its movements. 3. The gods of each country were supposed to have peculiar power within the limits of that country. The lesson of the plagues was, therefore, the more instructive to both the Egyptians and the Israelites that Jehovah took those forces and agencies which were peculiar to Egypt and asserted at once his supremacy over them, and the impotence of the deities who were supposed to hold them specially in charge.

THE ORDER OF THE PLAGUES.

The plagues were arranged in a significant order. MURPHY: "The Jewish Rabbis have not been slow to observe the regular order in which these successive strokes are arranged, and the gradual advance which they make from the external to the internal, and from the mediate to the immediate hand of God. They are in number ten, which is one of the numbers denoting perfection. They are divided first into nine and one; the last one standing clearly apart from all the others, in the awful shriek of woe which it draws forth from every Egyptian home. The nine are arranged in threes. In the first of each three the warning is given to Pharaoh in the morning, Ex. 7: 15; 8: 20; 9: 13. In the first and second of each three the plague is announced beforehand, Ex. 8: 1; 9: 1; 10: 1; in the third not; Ex. 8: 16; 9: 8; 10: 21. At the third the magicians acknowledge the finger of God, Ex. 8: 19; at the sixth they cannot stand before Moses, Ex. 9: 11; and at the ninth Pharaoh refuses to see the face of Moses any more, Ex. 10: 28. In the first three Aaron uses the rod; in the second three it is

not mentioned; in the third three Moses uses it, though in the last of them only his hand is mentioned. All these marks of order lie on the face of the narrative, and point to a deeper order of nature and reason out of which they spring.

"The gradation of the severity of these strokes is no less obvious. In the first three no distinction is made among the inhabitants of the land; in the remaining seven a distinction is made between the Israelites, who are shielded from, and the Egyptians, who are exposed to the stroke. In these seven, which are peculiar to the Egyptians, the order is the reverse of that in the work of creation. Three refer to the animal creation, and three refer to the vegetable world, the support of animal life. The last of these six is darkness, the opposite of light, the product of the first day; and the seventh is death. The first three affect the comfort and health of man; the next three take away the staff of life; then comes death itself, and the work of destruction is complete."

THE DURATION OF THE PLAGUES.

It is probable that the plagues extended through a period of several months. The first message of Moses to Pharaoh was delivered after the early harvest, in April or May, when alone the Israelites could gather stubble, Ex. 5:12. If the first plague, which turned the water of the Nile into blood, was connected with the annual inundation, as in the notes of the lesson we have considered highly probable, it occurred in June or July. The last plague, we know from the date of the Passover, took place on the fourteenth of Nisan, or about the first of April. Thus an interval of just one year was employed in the controversy of God with Pharaoh; and the plagues were distributed over a period of nine or ten months. The frogs, which even to-day constitute one of the plagues of Egypt, usually appear in September; and the second plague probably occurred at that time. The seventh plague occurred about the middle of February or the first of March, the only season when hail-storms are expected in Egypt, and when the flax is in blossom, and the barley in the ear, Ex. 9:31. The succeeding plagues came in more rapid succession than those which preceded, Ex. 9:14. The locusts came while the leaves were still green, towards the close of March, Ex. 10:4-15. The supposition of this considerable period has several advantages. 1. HENGSTENBERG: "It must have had a peculiar significance, if Jehovah went through an entire revolution, as it were, with the Egyptians, and for once displayed his miraculous power in connection with the ordinarily recurring circle of natural phenomena." Thus, at every season of the year, whether sacred or common, Jehovah triumphed. 2. We are better enabled to understand the hardening of Pharaoh's heart; the breathing-spell between the plagues would afford him opportunity to strengthen himself in unbelief. 3. We are enabled to see how the Israelites were prepared for immediate departure, when they were thrust out of the land. The curses sent in their behalf, from many of which they were exempt, would give them courage to expect their liberation. After the first few experiences of divine anger, Pharaoh would relax his tyranny; and we hear no more of taskmasters and cries. The people would gradually give themselves to preparation. Towards the close, under the direction of Moses, they seem to have been fully prepared to start, except that they had not cooked sufficient food; and they had collected together in a comparatively limited district, Ex. 12:37, anticipating the result. We can scarcely explain this, except upon the hypothesis that several months elapsed between the beginning and the close of the plagues.

THE EVIDENCES ATTESTING THE TRUTH OF THIS HISTORY.

Beside those which attest the truth of the book of Exodus and the whole Bible, there are some which specially attest the truth of the record immediately before us. 1. Canon COOK: "It is admitted by critics that the deliverance of the Israelites must have been the result of heavy calamities inflicted upon the Egyptians, who certainly would never have submitted to so great a loss had they been in a state to prevent it. Nor could it have been effected by a successful uprising of the Israelites, who where not in a position to resist the power of Egypt, and who, had such been the case, would certainly have preserved the record of a war issuing in so glorious a result. It is also generally admitted that the calamities, whatever they might have been, did not include the overthrow of the Egyptian power by foreign enemies or national insurrections. No notice of either, as Knobel remarks, is found in Hebrew traditions; and it may be added, that in neither of the reigns to which the Exodus has been assigned are there any indications of either calamity. Egypt was in the highest state of power and prosperity through the whole period within which all agree that the Exodus took place. A succession of such plagues as are described in the Exodus must therefore be assumed, and is, in fact, accepted by critics, as the only conceivable cause of the result." 2. The whole narrative of the plagues is so minutely accurate in its allusions to Egyptian manners and customs, to the phenomena of Egypt, to its physical features, to the soil, climate, productions, natural history and meteorology, as to render it certain that it is neither a myth nor a forgery. 3. The Passover is admitted to have been instituted about the time of the Exodus, and to commemorate that great event. J. P. THOMPSON: "The Passover is a perpetual witness for the Exodus. But the Passover contains features so unnatural, so remote in themselves from mere imagination or invention, that one cannot conceive of their origin, except in some fact of actual occurrence. This is true especially of the time and manner of killing the

14 AND Jehovah said to Moses: Pharaoh's heart is heavy;
15 he refuses to send the people. Go to Pharaoh in the

lamb, and the sprinkling of the blood on the side-posts and the upper door-posts of the houses. As the observance itself witnesses for the departure out of Egypt, so do these unique features of it witness for the facts which are recorded as having attended its own institution. But the tenth decisive plague was only the culmination of a series, and the whole narrative must stand or fall together. The plagues were actual occurrences."

14. **Jehovah said.** See on Ex. 6 : 1.

Heavy. In the preceding verse another word is used; and the sentence should be rendered as here in the passive, *Pharaoh's heart is hard.* In both these verses God describes the state in which his message found Pharaoh; and the blame is attached by implication to the king himself. Elsewhere God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. The following remarks may assist in the study of this difficult question: 1. Ten times the hardening and heaviness and stupidity are ascribed to Pharaoh himself, Ex. 7 : 13, 14, 22; 8 : 15, 19, 32; 9 : 7, 34, 35; 13 : 15, and ten times the hardening is ascribed to God, Ex. 4 : 21; 7 : 3; 9 : 12; 10 : 1, 20, 27; 11 : 10; 14 : 4, 8, 17. Ten is one of the numbers which denote completeness; and its double use here denotes the extreme obduracy of Pharaoh's disposition. 2. The first mention of the hardening process ascribes it to God, Ex. 4 : 21. KURTZ: "The announcement of the obduracy of Pharaoh was necessarily made from that point of view in which it appeared as the work of God; in making such an announcement God could not possibly refer exclusively or even prominently to the fact that Pharaoh would harden himself; for that would have implied that the people would be left to the caprice and hard-heartedness of an enemy." But being announced as under the direct supervision of God, the hardness was anticipated with hope, rather than with dismay. 3. HENGSTENBERG: "The hardening at the beginning of the plagues is attributed in a preponderating degree to Pharaoh, and towards the end to God." It is first twice ascribed to God, Ex. 4 : 21; 7 : 3, but only prophetically, as the whole process is viewed. When the historical account of it is given, it is first several times ascribed to Pharaoh before it is ascribed at all to God. This shows that the agency of Pharaoh in the process was first. It was related to the agency of God in the same process as cause to effect. But how does God harden a heart which hardens itself? (1) The message of God furnished Pharaoh a command which he resisted. His heart was already to a certain extent hard, or he would not have needed the message. The message was in turn the occasion of further hardening, arousing the opposition of the monarch. God foresaw that this would be the effect of his message; hence he predicted the result. But there was no fault in the message; the fault was in the heart that had already encouraged itself so far in wickedness as to be prepared to resist the call of duty. Thus God incidentally hardens hearts still; if the Gospel finds them determined to resist, it does but leave them more obdurate. (2) God sends to the heart of man not only an outward message by his servants, but also an internal message by his Holy Spirit. It is possible for men to resist the latter as well as the former. But where the resistance is decided there is danger that God will withdraw his Holy Spirit, Ps. 51 : 11; Eph. 4 : 30, and leave the soul to its own impulses, which are only evil. Thus, again, God is said to harden the heart: but it is only when the heart has first hardened itself against his admonitions. (3) In such a case, a soul is not merely surrendered to its own impulses. There are evil spiritual natures hovering about it and seeking to enter and destroy it. They are kept from it only by the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit. If He is grieved away, they have influence with the heart, and aid its wicked desires by their persuasions, Gen. 3 : 1–4; Rev. 12 : 9; 20 : 2; Job 2; 1 Chron. 21 : 1; Mark 4 : 15; 2 Cor. 2 : 11; 11 : 14; Eph. 2 : 2; 1 Pet. 5 : 8. And inasmuch as God permits them to enter, by the withdrawal of his Spirit and at the demand of the soul itself, he may be said to harden the heart: in the language of Scripture that which one permits is often attributed to him. (4) All the calamities which Pharaoh experienced hardened his heart. Calamities may either subdue or harden, according to the state of the heart itself. Inasmuch as God sent the plagues, knowing what their effect would be, he is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh. These considerations sufficiently explain the language of the Scriptures in reference to this matter. The revolting idea that God sends his Holy Spirit to hearts with the express design of hardening them finds no warrant in the Scriptures. The office of the Holy Spirit is to soften and win the soul.

15. **Pharaoh.** Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? Does he appear in profane history? We have seen that the Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph" and subjected the Israelites to servitude was probably Aahmes, who expelled the Hyksos, recovered Lower Egypt, and restored the country to prosperity. See on Ex. 1 : 8. The great grandson of Aahmes was Thotmes II. He is by many supposed to have been the Pharaoh of the text. 1. He began his reign with energy; but its later history and its close are not recorded on the monuments, as should be expected in the case of one so disastrously defeated by Moses and at last drowned while in pursuit of the Israelites. 2. The preceding reign had

morning; behold, he goes out to the water; and take thy stand to meet him on the bank of the river, and the staff

strengthened the power of Egypt so that is was recognized as superior to all others. But immediately after the death of Thotmes II. the nations on the north of Palestine revolted; and no attempt was made to subdue them for more than twenty years. This can be accounted for only upon the supposition that great calamities had befallen Egypt, crippling its resources, as the plagues and the depopulation of the eastern border province of Goshen must have done. 3. Thotmes II. married his sister. She was a woman of remarkable energy, and after the death of the king retained the regency for many years. It is thought that such a woman would help to harden the heart of her husband against the judgments of God. 4. Thotmes II. left no son. This tallies well with the statement of Ex. 11 : 5, where the death of Pharaoh's son is predicted.

The residence of Pharaoh was still in Lower Egypt, where the Israelites were settled, and on the Nile. From Ps. 78 : 12, 43, we learn that it was at Zoan, called Tanis by the Egyptians, and Avaris by the Hyksos, who made it their last stronghold. Zoan and Avaris have the same meaning, *going out*. The remains of Zoan show that it was a very strong city. Thotmes II. had been waging a war against the eastern tribes; and inasmuch as Zoan was the place of rendezvous for the armies of the delta, he would naturally make it his home. See on Ex. 2 : 5. It was on the Tanitic branch of the Nile, which was the western boundary of Goshen; and hence his intimate contact with the Israelites.

The water. The Nile, the only river of Lower Egypt. Our word Nile, which is derived from the Greek, is probably analogous to the Sanscrit *nîla*, which means *blue*, *dark blue*, and sometimes *black*. One of the Hebrew names of the Nile, found not infrequently in the Old Testament, is literally *the black*, Isai. 23 : 3; Josh. 13 : 3; 1 Chron. 13 : 5; Jer. 2 : 18. One of the great confluents of the river is still known by us as the Blue Nile; and the Lower Nile was painted blue by the ancient Egyptians. The Nile is also called in Hebrew *the river;* but in such cases a peculiar word, derived from the Egyptian language, is generally employed, rather than the more ordinary Hebrew word. It is not probable that by "the river of Egypt" is meant the Nile, Num. 34: 5; Josh. 15 : 4, 47; 1 K. 8 : 65; 2 K. 24 : 7; Isai. 27 : 12; the name was probably given to the Wady el Arish, further east. The "rivers of Ethiopia," Isai. 18 : 1, may possibly be the tributaries of the Nile.

The problem of the sources of the Nile was supposed to have been solved by the explorations of Captain Speke and Sir Samuel Baker; but the later discoveries of Livingstone have cast doubt upon their views, without unveiling the mystery. The course of the river has been traced, however, for more than two thousand seven hundred miles; and if, as some suppose, it extends one thousand miles farther, it is perhaps the longest river in the world. Egypt, which is almost rainless, is rendered fertile alone by the annual inundation caused by the rise of the river; and this inundation follows the winter and spring floods of equatorial Africa, where the Victoria Nyanza, a vast lake from which the Nile issues, or through which it passes, is filled by the excessive rains. Sometimes the inundation does not occur, and then there is famine; sometimes it is but partial, and it is then followed by dearth; sometimes it is excessive, doing great injury to the crops, and producing plague and murrain. See, for allusions to the inundation, Jer. 46 : 7, 8; 47 : 1, 2; Amos 8 : 7, 8; 9 : 5. The importance of the Nile in producing the fertility of Egypt caused it to be worshipped; and though not the chief, it was one of the favorite deities of the people, who considered it their special friend. The wholesomeness of its waters was a national boast. The Upper Nile is a broad stream flowing rapidly between high steep mud-banks, and guarded at a little distance on either side by bare yellow mountains, usually a few hundred feet in height, but sometimes a thousand. Occasionally the mountains jut on the river in bold promontories, or force it into a narrow channel; and they are honeycombed with tombs, Ex. 14 : 11. In Lower Egypt, with which the Israelites were better acquainted, there are no mountains; the river is divided, and flows in two channels through a level rich plain, bounded on the east and west by deserts. Near the sea it is still further divided; most ancient writers reckon seven mouths, as does Isaiah, 11 : 15; others reckon more; but there are at present only two of any considerable size. The failure of the others is a signal fulfilment of prophecy, Isai. 19: 5; 11 : 15. The monuments delineate the Nile as a stream bordered with flags and reeds, the abode of water-fowl, and bearing on its breast lotus flowers of various colors. At present there are but few reeds or water-plants; and this change was also predicted, Isai. 19 : 7. The river abounds in fish, Num. 11 : 5; but the ancient fisheries have failed, probably because the waters, though well-supplied, are not so prolific as formerly; and this change was also predicted, Isai. 19 : 8, 10.

It is probable that the king went to the river in the morning to offer his devotions, and, also, as it was the season of the yearly inundation, to mark the rise of the water. Its daily rise was accurately recorded under his immediate supervision. At other seasons he would come forth merely to worship the river-deity; at this season he would probably combine with his devotions the observation of the water, which was one of his duties.

16 which was turned to a serpent take in thy hand: and say
to him: Jehovah, God of the Hebrews, sent me to thee,
saying: Send my people, that they may serve me in the
wilderness: and behold, thou hast not heard hitherto.
17 Thus says Jehovah: In this shalt thou know that I am
Jehovah: behold I strike with the staff that is in my hand
on the water which is in the river, and it shall be turned
18 to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and
the river shall become offensive, and the Egyptians shall
loathe to drink water from the river.
19 And Jehovah said to Moses: Say to Aaron: Take thy

Take thy stand to meet him on the bank of the river. The message was to be made as impressive as possible. The message of Jehovah was to be delivered in the very presence of the river-deity, on whose power and good-will the prosperity of Egypt was supposed to depend. Possibly after the former interview, Moses and Aaron had been denied admission to the court; if so, this defiance of the king in the presence of his deity was the more striking.

The staff. For the use of Aaron, ver. 19. It had already been turned to a serpent in the presence of Pharaoh, demonstrating the power of Jehovah; it would therefore be recognized by the king as the symbol of that power.

16. **Jehovah.** The name by which God signalized his eternal power in delivering and blessing his people. See on Ex. 3: 4.

God of the Hebrews. Theirs in a special sense, though he was about to demonstrate to Pharaoh that he was also God of all the earth. The word *Hebrews* means *those from beyond;* it was applied to the Israelites because they were emigrants from the east, beyond the river Euphrates. The name arose in Canaan during the lifetime of Abraham, who was a Chaldean, Gen. 11: 31, and it descended to the chosen people. From the use of the word here, in an address to Pharaoh, and from its use by the Egyptian princess, Ex. 2: 6, 7, it is inferred that it was the usual designation of the Israelites among the Egyptians. Accordingly, on the monuments and in the papyri there is frequent mention of a subject race, the *Aperu*, and the name is held by most Egyptologers to be a corruption of the word *Hebrew*.

Thou hast not heard hitherto. God sends instruction as well as judgment, mingling mercy with severity. All our afflictions are for our spiritual good.

17. **Shalt thou know.** By a bitter experience.

That I am Jehovah. That I am the Eternal One, vigilant for my people.

I strike. An act of supreme defiance and indignity to the supposed deity. See note on *the staff*, ver. 15. Moses is said to do that which Aaron did at his command, ver. 19.

The water which is in the river. The deified waters. They are specified as "in the river," that Pharaoh may have no doubt as to the significance of the miracle.

Turned to blood. HENGSTENBERG: "It appears from Joel 3: 4, according to which the moon shall be changed into blood, that there is no reason to suppose that literal blood is here meant." The same thing is evident from the fact mentioned in ver. 24, that the water of the river when filtered through the sand of the shore was drinkable, having measurably lost its impurities. The water appeared red as blood, reminding the Egyptians of the innocent blood which they had shed.

18. **The fish ... shall die.** As the natural result of the changed condition of the element in which they subsist.

The river shall become offensive. Owing to the condition of the water and to the dead fish. An offensive god was new to Egyptian experience.

Shall loathe. The Nile yields the only wholesome water in Egypt; that of the wells and cisterns is inferior; rain-water seldom falls, and springs are extremely rare. The Egyptians boast of the Nile water as being peculiarly sweet. Their loathing was therefore remarkable.

19. All Egyptologists agree that this verse contains a complete description of the Egyptian water system.

Say to Aaron. According to the arrangement of Ex. 7: 1, 2; 4: 14-17.

staff, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, and they shall become blood; and there shall be blood in all the land of
20 Egypt, both in wood and in stone. And Moses did so, and Aaron, as Jehovah commanded: and he raised [his hand] with the staff, and smote the water that was in the river, before the eyes of Pharaoh, and before the eyes of his servants; and all the water that was in the river was
21 turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died,

Take thy staff. Moses had now given the staff to his brother, ver. 15.

Stretch out thy hand. Holding the staff. There were two actions; the symbolical outstretching of the staff, as if over the wide waters of the Nile, and the smiting of the river. In the East such significant actions are quickly understood.

Streams. The branches of the Nile, on one of which the residence of Pharaoh was situated. See note on *the water*, ver. 15.

Rivers. The original word is correctly rendered in the text, but it probably refers here to the numerous canals of Egypt, which were, in fact, artificial rivers. They communicated with the Nile by sluices, which were opened at the commencement of the inundation and closed at its termination; thus preserving water for commercial purposes.

Pools. The cisterns and tanks, found in every village, and filled with Nile water at the annual overflow.

Reservoirs. Literally *gatherings of waters*. The reservoirs were numerous and large in every part of the country. Some of them were enormous. The waters caught in them during the inundation were used during the dry season to irrigate the land.

In wood and in stone. The reference is to all household vessels in which the Nile water was kept. The words prove the familiarity of the writer with Egyptian customs. The Nile water is kept in vessels to settle, to be filtered, and to be prepared as an agreeable drink with the paste of almonds and other ingredients. The vessels most in use at present are earthen.

Thus the miracle was aimed at the Nile and at all its water, wherever found, that its reference to Egyptian idolatry might be marked. Other water, of natural fountains and wells, was not affected. See ver. 24, where it is evident that the water obtained by digging was free from the curse.

20. **Did so.** Immediately.

Before the eyes of Pharaoh and before the eyes of his servants. Moses and Aaron obeyed at once. Pharaoh was attended by a courtly retinue, including, probably, the magicians of ver. 22.

Turned to blood. The effect seems to have followed at once. Canon COOK: "In accordance with the general character of the narrative it might be expected that this miracle would bear a certain resemblance to natural phenomena, and, therefore, be one which Pharaoh might see with amazement and dismay, yet without complete conviction. It is well known that before the rise the water of the Nile is green and unfit to drink. About the 25th of June it becomes clear, and then yellow, and gradually reddish like ochre; this effect has been generally attributed to the red earth brought down from Sennaar; but Ehrenberg proves that it is owing to the presence of microscopic cryptogams and infusoria. The depth of the color varies in different years; when it is very deep the water has an offensive smell. Late travellers say that at such seasons the broad turbid tide has a striking resemblance to a river of blood. The supernatural character of the visitation was attested by the suddenness of the change, by its immediate connection with the words and act of Moses, and by its effects. It killed the fishes and made the water unfit for use, neither of which results follow the annual discoloration." The miracle seems to have been attended by an unusual production of the minute organisms to which the red color must be traced, and by their death, which rendered the water putrid and unfit for both the fishes and the people.

21. **The fish....died.** Not necessarily all; but there was very great mortality among them. The Egyptians considered salt-water fish impure; but the fish of the Nile constituted a very important part of their food. Hence they dreaded any disease which affected this source of wealth; and that

and the river became offensive, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river; and there was blood in all
22 the land of Egypt. And the sacred scribes of Egypt did

such diseases were not uncommon is shown by a hymn to the Nile written by Enna, an ancient Egyptian scribe, which says that the wrath of Hapi, the Nile-god, is a calamity to the fishes.

Blood in all the land of Egypt. This shows that it was the season of the inundation, when the waters extended over the country generally. The villages are placed on elevations so as usually to escape the inundation. The reddening of the water is anticipated as a sign that after it has passed the offensive stage of greenness, it may be drunk; but on this occasion it was loathsome.

22. **The sacred scribes of Egypt did so by their secret arts.** Their water was probably obtained by digging, as in ver. 24. Recent researches have thrown much light on the ancient magic of Egypt. Canon COOK: "Books containing magic formulæ belonged exclusively to the king; no one was permitted to consult them but the priests and wise men, who formed a council or college, and were called in by the Pharaoh on all occasions of difficulty. These 'wise men' are called 'scribes,' 'scribes of the sacred house,' 'scribes of occult writings,' etc. Under the 20th dynasty the use of these books was interdicted under pain of death. Two curious documents give a full account of the trial and execution of a criminal who fraudulently obtained possession of some books kept in the archives of the palace. No formulæ are more common than those which are used to fascinate or to repel serpents."

The scribes who imitated the first miracle, Ex. 7 : 11, 12, are named in 2 Tim. 3 : 8, Jannes and Jambres. The Targums and the Talmud give them the same names, which are now found to be Egyptian. The same persons were probably called upon in the present instance.

These magicians are held by all rationalistic interpreters, and by many of the orthodox, to have been mere tricksters; by the former because they believe in no miracles of any sort, and by the latter because they believe that God is the only being permitted to work miracles, and that a miracle, irrespective of the character of him who performs it and the nature of his message, is an evidence of divine authority. But the Scriptures recognize the possibility of miracles from evil sources, Gen. 3 : 1–5; Deut. 13 : 1–5; 1 Sam. 28 : 7–25; Matt. 24 : 24; Luke 11 : 19; 2 Thes. 2 : 8–12; Rev. 13 : 11–14, and give us a simple test by which we may determine when they are evidences of the divine presence, Deut. 13 : 1–5. The demoniacal possessions of Christ's day must be ranked among these wonders of Satan's kingdom. It is possible, also, that modern Spiritualism must be placed in the same category.

Those who regard the Egyptian magicians as mere tricksters, represent them in their first encounter with Moses, when his serpent swallowed theirs, as having performed the feat so common in Egypt at the present day, of causing a serpent to grow stiff like a rod, and at a given signal to come back, as it were, to life. But their miracle was just the reverse of this; it was not the transformation of a serpent into a sort of stick, but the transformation of their staves into serpents; and their staves were such as Moses himself bore, the usual accompaniment of Egyptian gentlemen. There was in this but little opportunity for deception.

We have seen, above, that the king had access to the books containing the secrets of the magicians; and if their works were mere tricks they would hardly have hardened his heart, as they are said to have done.

There was, no doubt, much of jugglery connected with ancient magic; but the evidence almost compels the belief that magic was also connected with evil spiritual influences. This alone will account for the severe legislation of Moses against it, Ex. 22 : 18; Deut. 18 : 10. CRANTZ: "The Angekoks of Greenland acknowledged, after their conversion to Christianity, that much of their conjuring had been nothing but trickery; but in a great deal of it there had been some spiritual influence, which they now abhorred, but could not describe."

It is the almost unanimous opinion of historians that the magicians, while ready to deceive, had great confidence in the assistance of spiritual influences. And it is difficult to read the account of Elijah's interview with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, without the conviction that they expected signs and wonders from their god, 1 K. 18 : 19–40.

These powers of evil are mercifully restrained within narrow limits; and with the advancement of Christianity they almost disappear, as the most terrible forms of demoniacal possession have disappeared. But the ablest and most unprejudiced thinkers, such as Trench, Hengstenberg, and Kurtz, recognize their existence. Those who consider all the Scriptural notices of magic as mere notices of trickery are obliged to resort to special pleading, whose ingenuity we may admire, but whose lack of the judicial spirit we must admit.

so by their secret arts. And Pharaoh's heart was strengthened, and he hearkened not to them, as Jehovah had spoken.

Strengthened. By the feeble imitation of the miracle which the magicians were able to effect.
Them. Moses and Aaron.

The plague continued seven days, ver. 25. We are not told how long after its cessation the next plague was sent: but see the preceding essay on the duration of the plagues.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. If we harden our hearts against the requirements of God, he may at length take his Holy Spirit from us, and leave us to the assured results of our stubborn rebellion; on ver. 14.

2. By hardening our hearts against the voice of God, we do but bring ourselves into misery, vers. 14, 17.

3. There are evil spirits ready to help us harden our hearts. Let us beware lest we submit to their influence; on ver. 14.

4. Afflictions, properly received, soften the heart; but received with a rebellious spirit they make us worse; on ver. 14.

5. Every time we reject the commands of God, we make our hearts harder and our prospects of eternal life more dim, ver. 14.

6. The plagues of Egypt, though they belong in the far past, still tell us of the God who wrought them and who now lives to mark and record all our deeds, vers. 14-22.

7. The evil that we do will assuredly return to us sometime, unless we seek pardon through Jesus Christ, vers. 14-22. The river in which the infants of the Israelites had been cast turned to blood, so that it could not be drunk by the murderers; who were also punished by fearful plagues, till in every house the first-born lay dead.

8. The period of the Egyptian plagues a type of the last day, when the wicked shall fall before the justice of an offended God, vers. 14-22.

9. The time shall come when sinners shall loathe that in which they now delight, ver. 18. Turn from these objects now lest your loathing come too late.

10. The righteous learn by his mercies that God is Jehovah, he who eternally exists for the deliverance of his people; the wicked learn it by his judgments; ver. 17: *In this shalt thou know that I am Jehovah.*

11. God governs all the forces of nature; "the rivers of water" are in his hand, vers. 14-22; Prov. 21 : 1.

12. The humblest servant of God need not fear kings, ver. 15.

13. Those providences and judgments which are terrible to the wicked are means of safety and rejoicing to the Christian. The plagues which punished Egypt delivered Israel from bondage. Those who love Christ should not fear; they should rejoice. The events of this life, the hour of death, and the day of judgment, should be anticipated with holy confidence, vers. 14-22; Rom. 11 : 22.

14. Moses turned water into blood. Christ turned water into wine. The severity of the Old Dispensation is thus contrasted with the joyousness of the New, under which we are privileged to live, ver. 20; John 1 : 17.

15. Sinners often court delusion, that they may quiet their consciences and their fears, ver. 22, comp. Ex. 7 : 11, 12.

16. Those who desire to sin can always find some sophistry at which to catch in support of their evil courses, ver. 22.

17. National sins are followed by national calamities, vers. 14-22.

18. When the people permit their rulers to commit public injustice, the people must suffer for their selfish apathy, vers. 14-22.

19. The importance of promptly seizing opportunities of doing good, ver. 15.

LESSON VII.—JEHOVAH'S PASSOVER. CHAP. 12 : 21-30, and 51.

THE LAST PLAGUE.

All the plagues were, in one aspect, judgments; all were, in another aspect, merciful warnings. But the earlier were intended chiefly to alarm and call to repentance; the last was more nearly a work of pure retribution. The general relation of the last plague to those by which it was preceded is well stated by KURTZ: "Of the previous plagues some, the first and second, had come, at a signal from Moses,

from the beneficent river of Egypt; others, the third and fourth, from the fertile soil of the country, and others from the pure air which pervaded the land; all the elements which were at work in Egypt had been one after another turned into a curse. And when that which was peculiarly Egyptian had been all exhausted, the countries round about sent their plagues into Egypt also; locusts came from the desert of Arabia, and the Sirocco with its impenetrable darkness from the Sahara. Yet all was apparently in vain. But this had been merely introductory and preparatory to the last decisive stroke. The tenth plague was not called forth by either the rod or hand of Moses, nor did it proceed from the water, the earth, or the air; but the hand of Jehovah himself was stretched forth. In the tenth plague the idea and intention of all the plagues were embodied and fulfilled. It was thought of first, Ex. 4 : 22, 23, but it was necessarily the last to appear. If it had been the first to appear, the fact would not have been so completely and universally displayed that Jehovah was the Lord in the midst of the land, Ex. 8 : 22, the Lord over the water, the earth, the air; over gods and men, cattle and plants, and that there was none like him in all the earth, Ex. 9 : 14. For this purpose it was necessary that there should be many miracles wrought in the land of Egypt, Ex. 11 : 9; and it was also requisite that they should have both sharply defined natural features and an unmistakably miraculous character, in order that freedom of choice might be left for faith or unbelief. But the tenth plague bore upon the face of it a purely supernatural character; and because it was the tenth, that is, the one which gave a finish and completeness to the whole, it exhibited in a clear and unequivocal manner the design of all the plagues from the very commencement; the last furnished the key to the entire series." The obstinacy of Pharaoh in refusing to let the Israelites depart until compelled by a series of terrible plagues was the providential occasion of the manifestation of God to the heathen and to his people; it was thus overruled to the glory of God, Ex. 9 : 16. But the last plague, more terrible than the others, was the chief agent in the manifestation of the divine name.

THE FIRST PASSOVER.

The first passover was celebrated on the night preceding the fourteenth of Abib, afterwards called Nisan, about the first of April. As early as the tenth of Nisan, the head of every household was to select a lamb or kid without blemish, and to keep it four days, one day for each generation of the sojourn in Egypt. It was to be slain in the evening, literally *between the evenings*, the first evening being immediately before sunset and the second immediately after it, Luke 9 : 12, comp. Matt. 14 : 15, 23. After the sprinkling of the doorway, the lamb was to be roasted, without breaking a bone, John 19 : 36, and to be eaten with bitter herbs, the symbol of a bitter life in Egypt. The Israelites were to eat it like persons in haste to depart, hastily, with staff in hand, with loins girded, with the feet shod; for God foresaw that they would need to begin the journey at once.

ADDITIONS AND CHANGES OF CEREMONIES.

The festival was ordered to be afterward observed annually as a memorial of the escape from Egypt. It was to be kept seven days, and the paschal supper was placed at the very beginning. All leaven was excluded from the houses of the Israelites during the feast; and this was in part a memorial of the hurried departure of the people from Egypt, when they had no time to bake leavened bread, and partly with reference to leaven as the beginning of corruption in the dough, and as, hence, the symbol of moral corruption. Some of the other ceremonies of the week had an agricultural reference; see the essay connected with the notes on Lev. 23 : 4-6, 15-21, 33-36. Foreigners, and servants not of Israelitish descent, could not partake of the paschal meal unless they had first become Israelites by circumcision. Israelites who had neglected circumcision were also excluded. The month of the passover was to be the first of the year, distinguished above others as that which witnessed the redemption of the chosen people. Additions and changes were made at various times, such as the day of convocation on the fifteenth of Nisan, Ex. 12 : 16, the offering of the Omer or first sheaf of the harvest, Lev. 23 : 10-14, the special sacrifices for each day of the sacred week, Num. 28 : 16-25, the presentation of money, Ex. 23 : 15; Deut. 16 : 16, 17, and the law of Deut. 16 : 1-6, that the victim should be slain at the national sanctuary, instead of at the house of the family, and that the blood should be sprinkled on the altar instead of on the houses.

Other modifications were introduced without any special legislation of which we know, but probably with the approval of the divine will expressed through the prophets; for the Israelites were scrupulous concerning such changes, and our Lord conformed to them. The lamb was not selected four days before the feast, Luke 22 : 7-9; Mark 14 : 12-14; the singing of the Hallel was introduced, Isai. 30 : 29; Matt. 16 : 30; several cups of wine were used at the supper, Luke 22 : 17, 20; 1 Cor. 10 : 16; and the group were permitted to recline, as a symbol of the rest of Canaan, Luke 22 : 14.

THE PREPARATION OF THE LAMBS AT THE TEMPLE.

The head of the family, or any one who was not ceremonially unclean, 2 Chron. 30 : 17, took the lamb into the court of the temple on his shoulders. As there were many bearing victims, they were divided into three companies. Rev. S. CLARK: "When the first division had entered, the gates were closed and the trumpets were sounded three times. The priests stood in two rows, each row extending

21 AND Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to
them: Draw out and take for you of the flock according to
22 your families, and slay the passover. And take a bunch

V. 21. *Or*, Go away, and take.

Ibid. *Of the flock;* the Hebrew word thus rendered is entirely different from that which is translated *lamb*, vers. 3-5, and denotes sheep and goat alike, according to the liberty granted, v. 5.

from the altar to the place where the people were assembled. The priests of one row held basins of silver, and those of the other basins of gold. Each Israelite then slew his lamb in order, and the priest who was nearest to him received the blood in his basin, which he handed to the next priest, who gave his empty basin in return. A succession of full basins was thus passed towards the altar, and a succession of empty ones toward the people. The priest who stood next the altar threw the blood out towards the base in a single jet. When the first division had performed their work, the second came in, and then the third." The task required time; but as the phrase "between the two evenings," embraced nearly all the afternoon and the succeeding twilight, the whole multitude were accommodated. The lamb was skinned and otherwise prepared; and, as it grew dark, the people went to their residences to roast it. A spit was thrust lengthwise through it, and a second through the shoulders; it was thus, as Justin Martyr long since observed, impaled on a cross, as if to point unmistakably to the Lamb of God. It was then roasted in an oven of earthenware.

THE CESSATION OF THE PASSOVER.

As the passover was a sacrifice to be offered at the national sanctuary, Deut. 16: 2, it is no longer observed by the Jews, who have no temple and no altar. They, however, keep the festival of unleavened bread, together with an imitation or memorial of the passover, which they do not regard as the real paschal meal. A small and ever-diminishing remnant of the ancient Samaritans still observe the feast on Mount Gerizim, adhering closely to the ceremonies prescribed in Ex. ch. 12, and rejecting all the later additions.

THE PASSOVER AS A TYPE.

The passover has always been considered by Christian writers as the clearest foreshadowing of gospel truth which the Old Testament supplied. 1. The deliverance of Israel from bondage was an apt type of the deliverance of spiritual Israel from the bondage of sin. 2. The lamb foreshadowed Christ: (1) it was unblemished and innocent; (2) its blood was shed to cover the abodes of guilty men; (3) its flesh was given to be eaten, representing the body of Christ slain and apprehended by saving faith, John 6: 53-55; (4) it was an expiatory sacrifice, on ver. 27. 3. The unleavened bread represented the state of sanctification into which the believer is brought. 4. The haste with which the meal was eaten, and the girt loins, the staves and sandals, were emblems of our present pilgrim-life, and our diligence to reach the Canaan beyond. And to put this reference of the festival beyond all doubt, Christ was crucified during the passover week, and was termed by an apostle emphatically, "our passover," 1 Cor. 5: 7.

JEHOVAH'S PASSOVER. Ex. 12: 21-30, 51.

21. Moses called. The command of God concerning the passover is recorded in the preceding verses. Here Moses, at the cost of some repetition, tells how it was obeyed. It is a marked characteristic of the four books from which the lessons of this series are taken, that the author always rehearses the commands of God, and afterwards records, in almost the same language, the way in which he executed them. This characteristic constitutes an important evidence that all the books came from the same writer.

The elders. See on Ex. 4: 29. Here, as there, the elders represent the people, comp. ver. 27. MURPHY: "The message was delivered to them in the beginning of the month, and certainly some days before the tenth," ver. 3.

Draw out. From the flocks. Or, if we adopt the alternative rendering suggested in the margin, the idea is that of departure from the assembly to procure the animal for sacrifice.

And take. To your houses.

Of the flock. See the marginal note above. That the animal was to be a lamb or kid we learn from ver. 5, comp. 2 Chron. 35: 7. In later times, the lamb only was used. It was the proverbial type of innocence, and hence a fit symbol of Christ, who is our Passover, John 1: 29, 36; 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8. That it might the better represent Christ, it was to be unblemished, and of the first year, its innocence unspoiled.

According to your families. One victim for each family. The families are more exactly

of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel, and the two posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his
23 house until morning. And Jehovah will pass by, to smite

described in ver. 3, by the term *father's houses*, which designates a collection of several families in our sense of the word; the married sons often living together in one abode under the care of their father. This was necessary where marriage was contracted at a very early age, where poverty rendered the utmost economy imperative, and where patriarchal traditions still prevailed. See on Ex. 2 : 1. The numbers embraced in the several groups would thus not be uniform. In later times, ten constituted the largest group; but at present, in the haste and poverty of the people, the groups were probably larger; the Israelites had been increasing rapidly, and the "father's house" probably contained many members. In some instances, however, it was too small to consume the whole lamb, ver. 4.

The passover. The word is here applied to the sacrificial victim. It was regarded as the pledge of God's promise to pass over the houses of the Israelites. The English word is a happy translation of the original, which means to *leap over*, *to pass over*, and hence, *to spare*. The word was applied to the victim because it was regarded as the pledge of God's promise to pass over the houses of the Israelites. It is also applied variously to the solemnity of the 14th of Nisan, of which the lamb was the sacrifice, Lev. 23 : 5; to the seven days' festival, including the paschal feast with which it began, usually termed "the feast of unleavened bread," Deut. 16 : 1; John 18 : 28; and to the sacrifices belonging to the feast of unleavened bread, Deut. 16 : 2; 2 Chron. 35 : 1, 7. These various applications of the word are in accordance with the ordinary laws of language, as the word *church*, at first applied to the local company of believers, is also used with reference to all the redeemed in earth and heaven, and also with reference to a house of worship.

22. **A bunch.** According to Jewish tradition, three stalks were necessary to constitute a bunch.

Hyssop. The word is used in the Scriptures only in reference to the passover, except in 1 K. 4 : 33, where it is described as a small plant springing out of the wall. According to the Hebrew tradition, the hyssop was a species of origanum, common in Palestine, and found also on the peninsula of Sinai; it is an aromatic plant with straight stalk, and leaves adapted to be used for sprinkling. The tradition is probably correct; for the passover has been observed in every generation since the Exodus. The plant grows in rocky places, and "on the walls of all the terraces in Syria." It is used as a seasoning, like our summer savory, which it resembles in taste; and sometimes it is eaten with bread. Its stalk is sufficiently long for the purpose mentioned in John 19 : 29, as the Roman cross was always quite low, the feet of the crucified nearly touching the ground.

Basin. The original word is used with wide latitude, sometimes meaning *a bowl* or *basin*, sometimes *a threshold*. The Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and many critics, understand it here in the latter sense, supposing that the lamb was killed on the threshold, from which the blood was taken to sprinkle the top and sides of the door.

Touch. The blood on the houses was not necessary to guide the destroying angel; but its use was an act of faith on the part of the Israelites, Heb. 11 : 28, such faith as claimed the promises of God, and made him who exercised it a participant in the benefits of the covenant. If any one had refused to comply with the command, his want of faith, and his unfitness to be numbered among the chosen people, would have been manifest. As a symbol of things to come, the blood also pointed to that of Christ, which must cover the soul that would be saved.

The lintel. Over the door, ver. 7.

The two posts. The doorways of the Israelites were enclosed, thus, by a frame.

If the word rendered *basin* above means *threshold*, then all the four sides of the doorway were sprinkled with blood. If it means *basin*, then only the top and sides were marked, as the parts one would most naturally glance at in passing.

None of you shall go out. For an obvious reason: outside the precincts protected by the blood of the lamb was the region of danger and death. Incidentally, perhaps, the command served to prevent any suspicion attaching to a single Israelite of being an agent in the death of any Egyptian.

23. **And Jehovah will pass by.** Speech accommodated to human modes of conception.

The destroyer. Commissioned by Jehovah to administer the last plague. The original word may denote either a personal agency, as an angel or a group of angels, or an impersonal agent, as a disease. From Heb. 11 : 28, it is inferred that the destroyer was an angel. The analogy of 2 K. 19 : 35

Egypt, and will see the blood on the lintel, and on the two posts; and Jehovah will pass over the door, and not suffer
24 the destroyer to come into your houses to smite. And ye shall observe this thing as a statute for thee and for thy sons forever.
25 And it shall be when ye come into the land which Jehovah will give you, as he has spoken, that ye shall observe
26 this service. And it shall be when your sons shall say
27 to you: What is this service to you? that ye shall say: It is a passover-sacrifice to Jehovah, who passed over above the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt, when he smote Egypt but delivered our houses. And the people bent the
28 head and bowed down. And the sons of Israel went, and

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and 2 Sam. 24 : 16 favors the inference. We learn from Ps. 78 : 49 that more than one angel was employed in administering the plagues.

Not suffer. Death cannot come to any one till God permits.

Into your houses. But outside there was no safety.

24. **This thing.** Namely, the feast of the passover. Not necessarily the ceremony of sprinkling the lintel and door-posts with blood, an observance which was afterwards abolished, when there was a priesthood and an altar; thenceforth the lamb was slain by the head of the household, but the blood was cast by the priest on the altar, Deut. 16 : 5; 2 Chron. 30 : 16, 17; 35 : 11, 12.

A statute. The joyous celebration of national mercies is thus sanctioned by the Scriptures.

25. **When ye come into the land.** It is probable that the observance of the passover, like that of circumcision, was neglected after the rejection of Israel at Kadesh, Num. 14, until the arrival in Canaan. It was observed in the wilderness of Sinai, Num. 10 : 1–5; but we have no record of its observance during the thirty-eight years of the wandering. It seems to have been revived by Joshua, Josh. 5 . 2–10. Foreseeing this discontinuance, Jehovah commands its revival in the promised land.

As he has spoken. God's promises are unfailing.

This service. MURPHY: "The ordinance is here designated a service, inasmuch as it was an act of obedience to the divine Master, whose servants they had become."

26. **When your sons shall say.** JAMIESON: "The usages practised at this yearly commemorative feast were so peculiar that the curiosity of the young would be stimulated, and thus parents have an excellent opportunity, which they were enjoined to embrace, for instructing each rising generation in the origin and leading facts of the national faith." Obedience to this commandment, which had reference to the spontaneous questions of the children, became, at a later period, one of the formalities of the paschal supper: at a certain stage of the meal the son asked his father the meaning of the observance; and in reply an account was given of the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, and of the Exodus, with a particular explanation of Deut. 26 : 5.

27. **A passover-sacrifice.** The paschal lamb is thus expressly termed a sacrifice. See also Ex. 23 : 18; Num. 9 : 7; Deut. 16 : 2, 5; 1 Cor. 5 : 7. The Romanists base on this passage their doctrine that the Lord's Supper, which, they maintain, took the place of the passover, is a sacrifice. We may freely admit that the Lord's Supper holds a certain relation to the passover, at whose observance it was instituted. See 1 Cor. 5 : 6–8. The Lord's Supper points back to the Cross, as the passover pointed forward to it. But it is clearly taught in the Scriptures that there are no longer sacrifices since the one great sacrifice of Christ, who fulfilled and thus abolished all the typical sacrifices, Dan. 9 : 27; Heb. 7 : 27; 9 : 23–26; 10 : 10, 12, 26.

Delivered our houses. Because the blood was found on them. The word *houses* is used by a common figure for the families which dwelt in them.

The people. That is, the elders, who represented the people, ver. 21. See on Ex. 4 : 29.

28. **Went.** To the flocks and herds.

did [so]; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

29 And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the first-born of the captive that was in the prison house; and all the first-born

And did. The miracles of Egypt had inspired them with confidence; and their obedience was prompt.

29. **At midnight.** When the darkness was most profound. The visitation was the more awful that it was associated with the gloom of this blackest and most mysterious hour. At the same time the Israelites were waiting in their houses, ready to depart, ver. 11, having finished the paschal supper, which was to be eaten in haste, ver. 11.

Jehovah smote. Through the agency of "the destroyer," ver. 23; see the note there. Canon COOK: "The employment of angelic agency does not always exclude the operation of physical causes. In the same chapter of 2 Samuel which describes the destruction of seventy thousand Israelites by an angel, whose personality is distinctly attested, see vers. 15–17, it is no less distinctly declared to have been effected by a pestilence; see vers. 13 and 25. Nature accomplishes God's purposes under his control." The prevalent infidelity of the day would put God afar from his works; hence there is the greater need of observing that he often displays his presence, even in miracles, through natural agencies. If man can control infection, carrying it to whom he will, shall we deny the same power to angels under the direct supervision of God? MURPHY: "The miraculous nature of the stroke appears in the prediction of the time and other circumstances of its infliction, in the instantaneous mode of its occurrence, in the selection of the Egyptians alone as its object, and the further selection of the first-born alone of man and beast."

All the first-born. It is evident from Ex. 13:2 that the first-born of the mother is intended; and as polygamy was practised in Egypt, Gen. 12:14–16, there would be in some cases more than one first-born in a house. MURPHY: "It appears that among men the first-born only that remained unmarried in the house of their parents are here to be understood. The first-born of Pharaoh is slain, while he himself is spared, though probably a first-born. It is said 'there was not a house where there was not one dead;' but there might have been grandparents and parents as well as a first-born child deceased in one house if other than the unmarried first-born had been contemplated in the threatened judgment." KURTZ: "The importance of the first-born may be thus explained: The first-born naturally enjoyed both precedence and preëminence over the rest; he was the firstling of the father's strength, Gen. 49:3, the first-fruit of his mother. As the first-born he stood at the head of the others, and was destined to be the chief of whatever family might be formed by the succeeding births. As he stood at the head of the whole, he represented the entire nation of the Egyptians. Hence the power which slew all the first-born in Egypt was exhibited as a power which could slay all that were born then, and in the slaughter of all the first-born the entire body of the people were ideally slain." Such an immense destruction of the most promising youth must have crippled the military strength of Egypt for years.

The first-born of Pharaoh. Who would have been king, had he lived.

The captive. In ancient warfare captives were not held as honorable prisoners, to be exchanged, or, on the advent of peace, released; they were either slain or carried to the country of the conqueror and reduced to slavery. If they were killed, it was sometimes with slow tortures; if they were held as slaves, they were treated with the greatest indignities and put to the hardest service. Distinguished captives were sometimes treated well, however, from political motives; and the descendants of captives were often free; and sometimes they arose to influence. The notices of captives on the monuments of the eighteenth dynasty, to which the Pharaoh of the text is supposed to have belonged, are numerous; they were generally employed in brick-making and in building.

Prison-house. Literally, *house of the pit.* We are ignorant of the exact meaning, since we know nothing of the manner in which captives were held in Egypt.

The first-born of cattle. This struck particularly at the animal worship of Egypt; many of the sacred bulls in the temples must have perished. The plague was, however, in its broadest sense a judgment upon all the gods of Egypt, ver. 12; for the office of a god was supposed to be to bless and protect its votaries. When, therefore, the Egyptians lost all their first-born, the dearest in every house, while the Israelites lost none, the gods who were supposed to protect the lives of the Egyptians, and

30 of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all Egypt; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

51 And it came to pass that very day, Jehovah brought

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who were worshipped on account of this supposed power, were proven utterly impotent, while Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, was proven supreme.

30. **Pharaoh.** His child was dead, ver. 29.

His servants. His courtiers and officers, who are frequently thus designated; Gen. 40: 20; Ex. 7: 20.

All Egypt. The whole land was moved.

A great cry in Egypt. How graphic! It was as if the whole land sent up but one great cry. The wailing of the Egyptians over their dead was always demonstrative, even for the East, where obtrusive grief is deemed a requirement of etiquette; see Gen. 50: 3, 10, 11. JAMIESON: "It is more easy to imagine than describe the confusion and terror of that people suddenly aroused from sleep and enveloped in darkness: none could assist their neighbors when the groans of the dying and the wild shrieks of women were heard everywhere around. The hope of every family was destroyed at a stroke." The judgment was but a just retribution for the crime of the Egyptians in reducing a whole nation to bondage and destroying its male children at birth. JAMIESON: "They were made, in the justice of God, to feel what they had made his people feel. Many a time have the hands of sinners made the snares in which they have themselves been entangled, and fallen into the pit which they have dug for the righteous."

Not a house. We are to understand this expression with the limitation that there may have been some houses in which there were no children, and others in which the first-born was already dead. The Scriptures frequently use the expressions *all* and *none* in a comparative sense, where the context is such as to guard the reader against misapprehension. In every house in which a first-born was found, one was slain.

The people had been aroused, probably, by the cries of the dying. When the singular character of the visitation was ascertained, it was at once understood. The previous plagues had prepared Pharaoh and the Egyptians to rightly interpret this one. The monarch sent for Moses and Aaron, and granted them all that they had asked. The Egyptians were also urgent that the Israelites should depart. MURPHY: "The awful feeling that all might in another moment, at all events by another judgment, be struck down, awoke in every breast." Most critics think that Pharaoh understood the departure of the people to be a final departure, and not for a festival three days distant, Ex. 14: 5; hence his astonishment when he learned that they had not gone straight into Asia, and hence his pursuit to avenge his injuries; Ex. 14: 8. But even if the permission of Pharaoh was given with reference to the mild demand at first made by Moses, as some maintain, the Israelites were bound to assert their freedom. He had no right at any time to detain them. The demand in its milder form had ceased to be made early in the series of plagues. Pharaoh, as the defeated party in the warfare with God, had no right to dictate the terms of his surrender. So great was the alarm of the king, that he besought Moses to bless him, supposing that this would avert danger. The people of Israel asked for jewels and raiment, and the Egyptians were in such anxiety to dismiss them that they readily gave, thus making partial amends for the poverty to which they had subjected Israel. It was a transaction the justice of which is obscured by the unfortunate and faulty translation of the Common Version, which represents it as a borrowing and a lending of that which the fugitives could never return. So pressing was the demand of the Egyptians for the immediate departure of the Israelites, that the Exodus at once took place, though the people had not time to prepare suitable food for the journey of even one day. There were over half a million Israelitish men, besides a vast crowd of Egyptian serfs, perhaps the remains of the Hyksos inhabitants, who availed themselves of the departure of the Israelites and of the general confusion to join the march and pass into the wilderness, where they doubtless perished with the whole rebellious generation, during the thirty-eight years of wandering. Providentially, the day of the Exodus was the four hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the day on which Israel had entered Egypt, ver. 41.

51. **That very day.** On which Egypt was smitten with the tenth plague. Under ordinary circumstances, some preparation, in addition to that already made, would have been deemed necessary; but the urgency of the Egyptians admitted of no delay; hence "on that very day" the Exodus began.

forth the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt in their hosts.

Jehovah brought. Moses would impress his readers with the fact that the Israelites did not achieve their freedom by their own prowess; they owed it to Jehovah.

Out of the land of Egypt. That is, the march began, and the result was assured, on that day; though the actual borders of Egypt were not crossed.

In their hosts. The people were organized according to military rules, and prepared to march. The popular view of the plagues, that they took place in the space of a few weeks, renders it impossible to account for the organization of Israel and the assemblage in one place of all the people, numbering at least two millions. If, however, we admit that a whole year elapsed during the controversy of God with Pharaoh, a year of growing terror to the Egyptians, and of growing confidence to the Israelites, we can at once understand how the latter could be organized, and how they could assemble unmolested at Raamses, anticipating the result. The temporary permission for their departure which Pharaoh four times gave, Ex. 8 : 8, 28; 9 : 28; 10 : 16, must have led the chosen people to make partial preparations, which their confidence in the result would forbid them to abandon. The time was sufficient, and the terror of the Egyptians prevented them from interfering violently with a people under the protection of a mighty deity.

Some have objected that so large a body of people could not have immediately started from Egypt. But when we remember their opportunities of preparation and organization, the attitude in which they ate the passover, ver. 11, the urgency of the Egyptians, vers. 31–36, and the facility with which Eastern people break up their abodes, there will be no difficulty. STANLEY: "In illustration of the event, the sudden retreat is recorded of a whole nomadic people, four hundred thousand Tartars, under cover of a single night, from the confines of Russia into their native deserts, as late as the close of the last century." The same writer mentions the silence and order with which the great caravans begin their journeys as illustrating the Exodus.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Only those who have availed themselves of the blood of Christ shall be saved, vers. 22, 23.

2. It should be our earnest prayer and endeavor, not only to have our own souls protected by the blood of Christ our Passover, but to secure the same protection for our households, vers. 21–23.

3. Consider the blessedness of those who are covered by the blood of atonement. All besides may perish, but they shall not be hurt by either death or the judgment, vers. 21–30.

4. We may be the children of godly parents; but even for such there is no safety outside the precincts protected by the blood of the Lamb, ver. 22. A personal interest in Christ is necessary.

5. Christ, our Passover. See the essay at the beginning of the lesson, entitled, "The Passover as a Type."

6. The Lord's Supper points back to the Cross, as the paschal supper pointed forward to it. Those Christians who neglect the Lord's Supper are more ungrateful than those Israelites who refused to celebrate the deliverance of their people from bondage; since the Christian's deliverance is a greater wonder of mercy than was that of the Israelite, vers. 24–27.

7. Children should freely inquire of parents and teachers the meaning of all religious observances, ver. 26.

8. The duty of parents to instruct their children in religious truth, ver. 27. How many souls are lost through the neglect of Christian parents!

9. If we disregard the lighter judgments of God, sent in warning, we bring upon ourselves swift and terrible retribution, vers. 29, 30.

10. The previous plagues may be regarded as a symbol of this life, in which we receive warning and discipline; the last plague of the day of judgment, when all who have not an interest in the blood of Christ shall meet the terrible justice of an offended God, vers. 21–30.

11. God sends warnings before many of the judgments of this life; but the judgment of the last day will be a complete surprise to the ungodly, ver. 29: 1 Thes. 5 : 2; 2 Pet. 3 : 10.

12. Those who do not yield willingly to the requirements of God, will be forced to yield, though unwillingly, ver. 31. It is better to render prompt and cheerful obedience, in which case heaven is our reward, than to render a tardy and grudging service, for which there is no reward. See Isai. 45 : 23; Rom. 14 : 11; Phil. 2 : 10.

13. What folly to resist a Being who holds our lives and our eternal destinies in his hands! vers. 28–31.

14. Those who would undertake the Christian pilgrimage to heaven must start at once, and just as they are, not waiting to prepare provisions for the way, which God will provide as they are needed, ver. 31; comp vers. 32–34.

LESSON VIII.—THE EXODUS. CHAP. 13 : 17–22.

17 AND it came to pass when Pharaoh sent the people, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines ;

15. None but God can bring a soul out of the bondage of sin, ver. 51. Therefore let us ever seek his aid.

16. The deliverance of the Christian from sin and woe will constitute the theme of his gratitude in heaven for ever, vers. 24, 25.

17. The rich and the poor, the cultured and the ignorant, the mighty and the lowly, are equal before God, who is no respecter of persons. And as they are subjected to the same conditions in reference to his mercy, so are they also in reference to his justice, ver. 29.

18. The promises of God are sure, ver. 25. Though all the trials of the wilderness may lie in advance of the Christian, heaven shall be his at last.

19. The Fourth of July and other holidays should be observed joyfully, and with a patriotic spirit, but with devout and thankful recognition of God's guidance in the struggle for national independence and growth, vers. 24–27.

20. The spirit of reverence and obedience in which we should hear God's holy word, ver. 27, *The people bent the head and bowed down*, and ver. 28.

21. The ministry of angels in administering the divine judgments, and in succoring those whom God loves ; on ver. 23.

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17. **By the way of the land of the Philistines.** That is, along the shore of the Mediterranean sea, into southern Palestine, then held by the Philistines. Their journey by this northeasterly route would have occupied but a few days, or at most a few weeks. This was the way taken by the Ephraimites, 1 Chron. 7 : 21–24, and it was used by the caravans from Damascus and Gilead, Gen. 37 : 25. The word *Philistine* means *emigrant*. The word *Palestine*, equivalent to *Philistia*, is derived from it ; it designated at first the country in which the Philistines dwelt, Ex. 15 : 14 ; Isai. 14 : 29, 31 ; Joel 3 : 4, and later, though never in the Bible, the whole land of Canaan. Philistia appears in the Assyrian inscriptions as "Palatzu on the Western sea," and in the Egyptian as *Pulusatu*. Like the *Palestine* and *Philistia* of the Scriptures, these names referred merely to the long and broad strip of maritime plain occupying the southwest corner of the promised land.

The emigration of the Philistines, which gave them their name, is spoken of, Gen. 10 : 14, Jer. 47 : 4 ; Am. 9 : 7 ; and under the name of Caphtorim, Deut. 2 : 23. CONANT : "The importance of this event may be inferred from Am. 9 : 7, where it is compared with the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The migration must have been very early, as they held their possessions in Palestine in the time of Abraham, Gen. 21 : 32, 34." See also Gen. 26 : 1. In Gen. 10 : 14 they are said to have come forth from the Casluhim, an Egyptian people, identified by many with the Colchians. But in Am. 9 : 7, and Jer. 47 : 4, comp. Deut. 2 : 23, they are said to have come from Caphtor. CONANT : "It is reasonable to suppose that more than one migration took place, either from different original points, or in passing over different countries. Of this there is another indication in the different names by which different divisions of them are designated, as Cherethites in Zeph. 2 : 5, and 1 Sam. 30 : 14, compared with 5 : 16."

The territory of the Philistines was assigned to the tribe of Judah, in the allotment of the country, Josh. 15 : 2, 12, 45–47. No portion of it was conquered, however, till after the death of Joshua, Josh. 13 : 2 ; Judg. 1 : 18. The Philistines subsequently recovered their territory and held it, obtaining supremacy also over the southern Israelites, whom they greatly oppressed, till the times of Samson, who began to deliver his people, and Saul, who continued the work of liberation, and David, who completed it. Solomon possessed their whole territory. The Philistines regained a partial independence when the Israelites were made weak by divisions, and continued a thorn in the side of the chosen people till even the period of the Maccabees, 1 Macc. 3 : 41. They were gradually wasted, however, and their later hostilities amounted to an annoyance, rather than an injury. After the Maccabean period they do not appear as a separate nation.

The Philistines were a commercial people, Zeph. 2 : 5 ; and traded in slaves, Am. 1 : 6 ; Joel 3 : 3, 5. They had sea-ports, Gaza and Ashkelon, and hence probably a navy. They were skillful smiths, 1 Sam. 13 : 20, and armorers, 1 Sam. 17 : 5, 6, and builders, judging by the prolonged sieges which their cities sustained. They were acquainted with the founder's and goldsmith's arts, 1 Sam. 6 : 11. They were wealthy and prosperous, Judg. 16 : 5, 18. Their superstition appears in 2 Sam. 5 : 21 ; 1 Sam. 31 : 19, and 2 Macc. 12 : 40. Their idols are named in Judg. 16 : 23 ; 1 Sam. 5 : 3–5 ; 1 Chron. 10 : 10 ; 1 Sam.

for that was near; for God said: Lest the people repent
18 when they see war, and return to Egypt. And God led the people round about by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea; and in ordered ranks came the sons of Israel up out of the land of Egypt.

V. 18. *Or*, and with loins girt came. *Or*, and brave-hearted came.

31 : 10, and 2 K. 1 : 2-6; their priests and diviners in 1 Sam. 6 : 2. Their morals, judging from the indications in the history of Samson, were extremely lax.

If we except the powerful Hittites in the north of Palestine, Ex. 3 : 17, notes, the Philistines were the most warlike people of the country at the period of the Exodus. They had five confederate cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, with the territories adjoining each, 1 Chron. 18 : 1; 1 Sam. 5 : 6, in which were many dependent towns, Josh. 15 : 45-47; 1 Chron. 18 : 1; 2 Sam. 1 : 20; Ezek. 16 : 27, 57, and an immense population. At a later period they waged successful war against the Sidonians; and the Egyptian records bear frequent testimony to their prowess, as also do those of the Bible. Occupying the southern shore of Palestine, the shortest route for Israel lay directly through their territory.

Lest .... repent. Their frequent repentances, in the presence of difficulties far less grave than the conquest of Philistia would have presented, fully illustrate the words of the text; see Ex. 14 : 11, 12; 16 : 3; 17 : 2; Num. 14 : 1, 2. God had other reasons besides this for leading his people by the more circuitous route, as, for example, his desire that they should receive discipline by a life of faith, sustained by miracles, his design to renew the covenant at Mount Sinai, etc.; but the one here mentioned was that on which the others arose. Had the people possessed sufficient faith to encounter at once the most warlike nation of Canaan, they would not have needed the marvellous discipline of the wilderness; and the law could have been published elsewhere than on Sinai. MURPHY: "The natural reason, not the supernatural, is here given for directing their course."

When they see war. They had a military organization, ver. 18; Ex. 12 : 51, and arms, ver. 18, notes; but they had no military experience, and but feeble faith in the help of Jehovah.

And return to Egypt. The references to the murmurings above show that they frequently desired to return. God understood their sensual and unpatriotic disposition.

18. **God led the people round about.** These words do not refer to the thirty-eight years spent in the wilderness; for the people were not condemned to this period of wandering till much later, Num. 14. Had they been reasonably diligent in learning the lessons of the way, the year and a half or two years which they spent before arriving at the borders of the promised land and sending out spies preparatory to its conquest, Num. 13, would have been amply sufficient to school them for their future task. By proposing to lead them through this longer way God gave them an opportunity to grow in faith and heroism. They rejected the opportunity; and God rejected them, Num. 13 and 14.

The way. The route, well known, between Egypt and the Sinaitic peninsula.

Of the wilderness. The way probably lay through the wilderness which stretched from the head of the Gulf of Suez, the Red Sea of the Exodus, to the Mediterranean Sea. The road passed around the head of the gulf. The Israelites were not permitted to pursue it far; for when they came to Etham, ver. 20, God commanded them to turn down the Egyptian side of the gulf, Ex. 14 : 1-4, preparatory to their miraculous escape from Pharaoh recorded in the next lesson. Had they continued upon the road here mentioned, Pharaoh, who seems to have begun his pursuit before he heard that they had changed their course, Ex. 14 : 5-9, would have annoyed and perhaps destroyed them, had not God intervened for their preservation.

In ordered ranks. The original term refers to the orderly arrangement of troops apart from the women and children, Josh. 1 : 14; 4 : 12, 13. The original term is probably derived from the Hebrew numeral *five*, and its use here may indicate that five was the basis of the military arrangement. MURPHY: "From the usage of this word we infer that the full-grown men formed a body arranged in columns or battalions, for orderly march, apart from the women and children. The full-grown men marched in order, arranged on the basis of five, and having probably captains of tens, of hundreds, of thousands, and of greater numbers. We know that ultimately they formed five corps or battalions, Num. 1 and 2. This body of men was thus enabled to move with precision, and afford an efficient protection to the scattered families that were advancing slowly, encumbered as they were with the cattle and the movable property that were under their charge."

The Israelites were probably armed, though this is not stated; for, 1. There is no intimation in

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had strictly sworn the sons of Israel, saying: God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence with you.

20 And they broke up from Succoth, and encamped in

the Scriptures that the Egyptians had disarmed them. 2. Occupying a frontier district, liable to incursions from the desert, they would almost inevitably become accustomed to the use of arms; and the Egyptians would rather arm than disarm them, making them a defence of the border. 3. The fear which Pharaoh expressed, Ex. 1 : 10, that they might join the invaders of Egypt and fight against his government, indicates that they had arms. 4. The panic which seized them when the armies of Pharaoh pursued, Ex. 14 : 10, only shows that they dreaded the splendid troops of this warlike monarch, and not that they were unarmed. 5. At the battle of Rephidim, which was fought shortly after the passage of the Red Sea, they were armed, Ex. 17 : 10 ff.; and as they could not have procured arms in the desert, they must have brought them from Egypt. Josephus says that they procured arms from the Egyptians who were drowned in the Red Sea; but Moses is silent concerning this, Ex. 14 : 30; and manifestly only such arms as were of wood, or as were fastened to the bodies of the Egyptians washed ashore, could have been procured; and these would not have sufficed for a battle.

19. **The bones of Joseph.** In accordance with his dying request, Gen. 50 : 24, 25; Heb. 11 : 22. The body was embalmed; but the bones are properly named, as the flesh of the mummy shrivelled away, leaving nothing but the skeleton and its covering of blackened skin. We do not know where the remains had been kept; but, as the Israelites were in favor when he died, they were doubtless deposited in Goshen, in the charge of his own people, who had sworn to take them with them to the promised land. They were preserved with care during the forty years of desert wandering, and at length deposited in Shechem, in the territory of Ephraim, the offspring of the great statesman, Josh. 24 : 32. It is possible that they still repose beneath the structure which is pointed out to the traveller in the Holy Land as the tomb of Joseph.

The remains of Joseph were not the only ones carried to Palestine: the brothers of Joseph, the heads of the tribes, had probably left the same charge to their descendants, who carefully fulfilled it, Acts 7 : 16. There would be no difficulty in reference to conveyance, as the Israelites had wagons, Num. 7 : 3, 7, 8.

Strictly sworn. His desire was so intense, that he could not trust the mere word of his people, but exacted an oath of the strictest kind. Three hundred years had passed; but the solemn charge had been transmitted from father to son, and was still remembered. MURPHY: "The oath, and the hopes inseparably connected with it, were often talked over in the family gatherings of the evening. This little incident warrants us to imagine the frequent and earnest conferences which took place in the homes and social meetings of Israel concerning the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the land to which they were to return, the privileges and blessings that were in store for the seed of Abraham. If the dying request of Joseph was remembered, we cannot suppose that the sublime prospects held out to their race by the word and oath of the Lord were altogether forgotten. We must presume they were the topics of frequent meditation and fervent prayer."

20. **Succoth.** Their first station after leaving Rameses. For the position of Rameses, the principal city of Goshen, see on Ex. 1 : 11. It was Israel's place of rendezvous, Ex. 12 : 37. Canon COOK: "The Israelites, by whom it had been built, were probably settled in considerable numbers in it and about it. Pharaoh with his army and court were at that time near the frontier, and Rameses, where a large garrison was kept, was probably the place where the last interview with Moses occurred. Under the nineteenth dynasty the Pharaohs received foreign embassies, transacted treaties, and held their court in this city, which was considerably enlarged and embellished by Rameses II."

The name *Succoth*, means *tents* or *booths*. It may have been given the place by the Israelites in memory of the first night passed in tents and booths, after leaving the houses of Goshen. Another theory is that, lying near the eastern border of Goshen, in the pasture lands, it was occupied by that part of the chosen people whose business was with flocks and herds, and named from the half-nomad life in tents and huts, which its shepherd inhabitants led. This is more probable from the fact that the name seems to occur in Egyptian records as if it had long been familiar to the Egyptian people. Succoth was about half way from Rameses and Etham.

Etham. The name means the same with Pithom; see Ex. 1 : 11; and the two may refer to the same place. The name occurs in the Egyptian records, from which we learn that Etham was a frontier city, where the Arabs of the desert came in contact with the Egyptians, and where the kings of the eighteenth dynasty were accustomed to review their troops when about to undertake a Syrian cam-

21 Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them in the

paign. Hence it was, as Moses says, "in the edge of the wilderness." It was probably at the head of the Gulf of Suez, which has since receded, owing to the drifting of the sands.

There seems to have been but one day's journey, or about fifteen miles, between Rameses and Succoth, and Succoth and Etham. It is true that between the stations mentioned in the history of the Exodus there sometimes lay several days' journey; the stations being often positions where the people tarried longer than a single night; see Num. 10 : 33; 33 : 8. Such may have been the case here; but the Israelites certainly moved as rapidly as possible, Ex. 14 : 5; they would not linger when they knew that the terrible power of Egypt lay behind. Hence the conclusion that the three stations on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea mark the nightly encampments of the chosen people.

21. **Pillar of cloud.** This seems to have first appeared at Etham; the reason being, that this place was "in the edge of the wilderness," beyond which the way was difficult, and that the Israelites were about to turn and place themselves in the *cul de sac*, from which they were delivered by crossing the Red Sea, an astounding movement, needing the presence of Jehovah to order and to lead it. The Persians and Greeks were accustomed to use fire and smoke as military signals. Alexander gave the signal of departure from camp by a fire on a high pole over his tent; if it were night, the army saw the fire; if it were day, they saw the smoke. It was a general custom among the Arabians to govern the march of armies by this means. That it was also an Egyptian practice seems to be established. Canon COOK: "In an inscription of the ancient empire, an Egyptian general is compared to 'a flame streaming in advance of an army.' Thus, too, in a well-known papyrus, the commander of an expedition is called 'a flame in the darkness at the head of his soldiers.'" KURTZ: "To the present day the same custom is adopted by trading caravans. Even in the cities of the East, when there are any evening processions, iron fire-baskets, with pine-wood burning in them, are carried in front, on the top of a long pole." That which Eastern armies were forced to provide by natural means, Jehovah provided for his army by miracle. As the signal-fire was always at the head of the army, by the leader, Jehovah marks himself as the leader of his people, by going before them in this conspicuous and magnificent form. The signal was specially needed by the Israelites, as they were to march through a country where there were no roads, as their numbers were so great as to render their guidance difficult, and as many parties must have been obliged to scatter abroad in search of pasturage for the flocks and herds.

Many particulars concerning this mysterious presence are happily summed up by KURTZ: "When we read in Ex. 13 : 21 that Jehovah went before Israel, by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, we might be led to suppose that there were two different pillars. But it is soon apparent that this was not the case. For in Ex. 14 : 19 and Num. 9 : 21, only one pillar is mentioned, and in Ex. 14 : 24 it is called a pillar of cloud and fire. The cloud was the vehicle of the fire, and entirely lighted up by the fire, which caused it to shine with brilliant splendor on the dark background of the night; while it looked like a mere light cloud when contrasted with the brightness of the sunshine. We have no reason to depart from the literal meaning of *cloud* and *fire*, and, therefore, regard the former as an actual cloud, formed of the same material as every other cloud; and the latter as actual fire. The ordinary form which it assumed was that of a pillar, which moved forward at the head of the Israelites, and showed the way to the hindmost ranks of the whole procession, Ex. 13 : 21; Deut. 1 : 33. Still, we must not imagine that this form was unchangeable. When the cloud descended between the army of the Egyptians and that of the Israelites, showing a bright light to the latter and making the darkness more intense to the former, its form was no doubt that of a wall rather than a pillar. When the people were to encamp for the purpose of resting, the cloud descended; and when they were to set out again, it was taken up, Ex. 40 : 35 ff.; Num. 19 : 16 ff. So long as they rested, it remained suspended above the camp; at a later period, above the tabernacle, Num. 9 : 16. According to Ps. 105 : 39, Jehovah spread the cloud over Israel as a protecting covering, Isai. 4 : 5, 6; 1 Cor. 10 : 1, 2; a poetical description, which may, however, be literally in harmony with Num. 10 : 34." The light from the cloud sometimes shone by day, Ex. 16 : 7–10. The imagination is almost forced by Ex. 16 : 10 to picture the display as that of an awful storm-cloud resting on the horizon over the wilderness, and lighted up with excessive glory, and speaking, vers. 11, 12, in tones of thunder. It seems to have been the same cloud which rested on Sinai, breaking forth with terrible thunders and flashes of lightning, Ex. 19 : 16–19. The reader will also call to mind the great cloud of light which descended at the transfiguration, Matt. 17 : 5, and the cloud in which our Lord ascended. Acts 1 : 9.

The cloud was always the symbol of the divine presence. Jehovah himself was present in the pillar, Ex. 14 : 19, 20; 19 : 9; 33 : 9; Num. 12 : 5; 14 : 14; Ps. 105 : 39. He who thus manifested himself is called the angel of God, Ex. 14 : 19; from which we learn that he was the Son of God, the second

way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light;
22 to go day and night. The pillar of cloud departed not by
day, nor the pillar of fire by night, before the people.

person of the Holy Trinity; see on Ex. 3: 2. The fire and cloud are graphic symbols of the divine nature, the former expressing its justice, and the latter the mercy by which justice is tempered, that guilty sinners may not at once perish from its flashings. MURPHY: "They have at the same time a general fitness to indicate the presence of the Lord without awakening any material or carnal misconceptions in the mind of the beholder. They do not belong to the kingdom of nature or art, and therefore do not suggest any debasing views of the Creator, or impute to him any properties of the creature." "The pillar that balances itself in mid-air, unsupported by the earth, and unshaken by the winds of heaven, serves well to mark the presence of him who is independent of the laws of nature." "The pillar of fire and cloud is manifestly not the Lord, nor the figure of the Lord, but the visible and real sign of his actual presence among his people for their guidance, protection, and comfort." See also for the symbolry, 1 K. 18: 10, 11; comp. Ezek. 10: 4, and Rev. 14: 14.

By night in a pillar of fire. As the days are excessively hot in the East, it is customary to repose about noon, and travel far into the night.

22. Departed not. God knew the discouragement of the people and their readiness to fear; and that they might be ever assured of his protection, he did not suffer the symbol of his presence to abandon them for a moment. MURPHY: "We have not now the pillar of fire and cloud; but we have the Word of God, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. This also is a supernatural revelation of the present Lord and his Messiah by the eternal Spirit, conveyed through the minds and words of holy men. This spiritual flame, kindled from heaven, and enshrined in the cloud of human speech, has not been lost or extinguished, but continued from generation to generation, and is in the way of being diffused throughout the whole world, to be the guide of the nations to the land of promise till the days of darkness disappear. It remains a speaking token of the continual presence of the God of all grace, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in his Church."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. God's tender care for those who are but just starting on the Christian pilgrimage, and are unused to the warfare, vers. 17, 18. It is a care, however, which subjects them to wholesome discipline.

2. God has promised that his children shall not be tempted above that they are able to bear. With the temptation he will make a way of escape. If he perceives that his child is not able to meet the Philistines, he will lead him away from them, until he has disciplined him and made him strong, vers. 17, 18; 1 Cor. 10: 13. This truth may be applied, first, to Christians who are terrified by their weaknesses and manifold temptations and fears; and second, to those who fear to become Christians lest they should fall and thus disgrace their profession.

3. If we had more faith God would lead us in a more pleasant way, vers. 17, 18.

4. God leads us in a way of difficulty and danger in order to exercise and cultivate our faith, vers. 17, 18.

5. By turning aside from the difficulties in the path of duty, we fall into greater difficulties, vers. 17, 18.

6. Fear not to begin the Christian pilgrimage; Jesus will lead you, vers. 21, 22.

7. As Jesus went before his people in the wilderness, vers. 21, 22, so he has gone before us in all duties and trials, having lived a life of poverty and toil, and died a death of anguish for the world. Let us follow him whithersoever he leads.

8. The Christian often makes as rapid progress in the divine life in his hours of discouragement as in his hours of confidence and joy, ver. 21. Jesus led his people not only in the day, but also in the night: "*that they might go by day and night.*"

9. Jesus often manifests himself to us more brightly in the darkness of trouble and sorrow than in the day of prosperity and pleasure, a pillar of fire by night, a pillar of cloud by day, vers. 21, 22.

10. Jesus is with his earthly people now as really, though not as sensibly, as he was with his ancient people in the pillar of cloud and fire, vers. 21, 22; Matt. 28: 20; 18: 19, 20.

11. It was a great blessing to have the sensible manifestation of Jesus in the pillar, vers. 21, 22; but it is a greater blessing to have faith to believe without such a manifestation, John 20: 29.

12. The value of church organization and discipline during our march through the wilderness of this world, ver. 18: "*ordered ranks.*"

13. The Christian should not be careless concerning his body; it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it has the promise of a glorious destiny hereafter, ver. 19.

14. We should revere the memory of pious ancestors, ver. 19.

LESSON IX.—THE RED SEA. CHAP. 14 : 19–31.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

There were two routes between Egypt and Palestine open to the Israelites. The first and shortest lay along the Mediterranean coast, and led into Southern Palestine, then occupied by the warlike Philistines. As the people were not prepared for immediate war, this route was not attempted, Ex. 13 : 17, 18. The second lay through the desert, passing north of the extremity of the Gulf of Suez, the Red Sea of the Exodus, which formerly extended far beyond its present terminus. Had the multitude been permitted to select this route, they could have been overtaken and destroyed by the army of Pharaoh, which seems to have begun its pursuit almost immediately, Ex. 14 : 5–10 ; or, escaping this fate, they would have approached the promised land unprepared for its conquest, Num. 13, 14. A yet longer and more difficult route was therefore selected, Ex. 14 : 1–4, that they might be prepared, by miraculous interpositions, and by the hardships of the desert, for the task which lay before them.

It is impossible to determine the exact point at which the passage of the Red Sea was effected ; but it must be somewhere near the present town of Suez. The people were pursuing the route which led around the head of the Sea, and had come to Etham, "in the edge of the wilderness," Ex. 13 : 20, probably a frontier town at the head of the Gulf, which formerly extended further north than its present terminus ; see below. Here they were directed to turn southward along the western or Egyptian side of the Red Sea. They were commanded to encamp "before," that is, *in sight of*, Pi-hahiroth, Ex. 14 : 2, which, if it is a Hebrew name, may mean *the mouth of caves*, or if Egyptian, as is more probable, *the grassy places*, and is usually identified with the modern Ajrûd, "a fortress with a very large well of good water," says Canon COOK. It is about ten miles northwest of Suez, at the foot of an elevation which commands the intervening plain. The encampment is further described as "between Migdol and the sea," Ex. 14 : 2. Migdol means a *tower* or *fort*. Most recent critics find the place at the modern Bîr-Suweis, or *Wells of Suez*, about two miles and a half back of the town. ROBINSON : "Here are two deep wells, surrounded by a square massive building of stone, with towers at the corners, erected in the seventeenth century, as appears from an inscription. The water is brackish, and is carried to Suez on asses and camels, only for cooking, being too salt to be drank." Robinson elsewhere rightly remarks, that if the wells of Ajrûd and Bîr-Suweis were in existence at the time of the Exodus, they would naturally mark the sites of towns. The camp was also "over against Baal-zephon," Ex. 14 : 2. Robinson conjectures that Baal-zephon may have occupied nearly the present site of Suez. The name is Phœnician, probably meaning *the tower of Baal*. It is known that the Phœnicians, the most commercial people of the period, had a settlement in Lower Egypt at a very ancient time. Sethos I., according to Chabas, gave a name closely resembling Baal-zephon to a city in the neighborhood of Suez. The ruins of the ancient Kolzum, one-third of a mile north of Suez, probably mark the site of Baal-zephon. The commercial importance of Suez would lead us to expect a city there, with outlying defences such as Pi-hahiroth and Migdol. The three places are again mentioned in Num. 33 : 7, 8, in terms quite in keeping with those of Ex. 14 : 2. The encampment seems to have been between Bîr-Suweis and the sea, having Ajrûd in the rear and Suez in front.

It is probable that at the time of the Exodus the Gulf of Suez, the Red Sea of the text, extended much further than its present terminus. ROBINSON : "I am not aware of any circumstances which go to show that the level of the sea itself has been changed ; but the change, if any, has been brought about solely by the drifting in of sand from the northern part of the great desert plain, which here extends to the eastern mountains. This plain is ten miles or more wide. Burkhardt crossed it in 1812, in six hours from the wells of Mab'ûk, at the foot of the mountains, to the mounds of the canal, and says it was 'full of moving sands, which covered the plain as far as he could discern, and in some places had collected into hills thirty or forty feet in height.' Such it was as we also saw it on our left in passing around the head of the bay ; and this sand, driven by the strong north-east wind, which often prevails, is continually carried towards and into the water, and the process of filling up is still going on. There can be little room for doubt that the islands above Suez were formed in this manner ; since, in former days, vessels probably lay at Kolzum, which they now cannot reach. Around the head of the inlet, there are also obvious indications that the water once extended much further north, and probably spread itself out over a wide track towards the northeast. The ground bears every mark of being still occasionally overflowed, and our Arabs said it was often covered by the sea, especially in winter, when the south winds prevail." That the recession of the water has been caused by the drifting of sand, and not by the upheaval of the coast is proved by the fact that the ruins of Kolzum are still near the water, which would have receded had there been a general elevation of the land. R. S. POOL : "Thus the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled, 11 : 15 ; 19 : 5 ; the tongue of the Red Sea has dried up, and a cultivated and well-peopled province has been changed into a desolate wilderness. An ancient canal

conveyed the waters of the Nile to the Red Sea, flowing through the *Wady-et-Tumeylât*, and irrigating with its system of water-channels a large extent of country; it also provided a means for conveying all the commerce of the Red Sea, once so important, by water to the Nile, avoiding the risks of the desert journey, and securing water carriage from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. The drying up of the head of the gulf appears to have been one of the chief causes of the neglect and ruin of this canal." While the desert sands have thus affected the sea immediately north of Suez, they have not reached the town itself; for the soil on which it stands is hard and gravelly. The opposite shore has probably been extended, rendering the gulf more narrow, as the northeast winds, which often prevail, would naturally bear to it their sand-burdens from the desert.

Six miles below Suez, a bold line of mountains, called Jebel 'Attâkah, *the mountain of deliverance*, terminates in a bold promontory, between which and the water there is but a narrow passage; and thus, while the sea cut off the march of the people on the left, the mountains rendered escape to the right or the front impossible; and the Egyptians, having determined to hover upon the rear, Ex. 14: 5–10, were pressing eagerly forward, elated with the prospect of victory and revenge, Ex. 14: 3, 23. Pharaoh probably began his march before he received intelligence of the difficult position in which the Israelites were placed; so that he was near at hand and ready to take immediate advantage of what he considered a grave military blunder of his enemies.

Both north and south of Suez are lines of shoals, stretching across the gulf; and when a strong northeast wind concurs with an ebb-tide, these shoals are almost laid bare, so that under favorable conditions they constitute fords not unfrequently used. The present head of the Gulf is two or three miles wide. From its northeastern corner, on which the town of Suez is built, a narrow arm runs up northward nearly the same distance. Opposite Suez this arm, at what may be called its mouth, is about two-thirds of a mile wide; according to Niebuhr, it was probably once wider, and higher up it is broader and deeper. The shoals extend across the arm above Suez, and also across the Gulf proper for a mile and a half or two miles below Suez. It is probable that the passage took place over these lower shoals; and if their position was anciently what it is now the Israelites would cross in an oblique direction, passing over a distance of three or four miles from shore to shore. There would be thus ample room for all the conditions of the miracle. The tides of Suez vary from three and a half to seven feet in depth. Nearly opposite the town, and in sight from its roofs, are the Ayoun Mousa, or Wells of Moses, an oasis, which, according to tradition, marks the first halting-place of the Israelites, after their miraculous escape. Thus, the neighborhood fulfills every requirement of the sacred narrative. ROBINSON: "A strong northeast wind acting here upon the ebb-tide, would necessarily have the effect to drive out the waters from the small arm of the sea which runs up by Suez, and also from the end of the Gulf itself, leaving the shallower portions dry, while the more northern part of the arm, which was anciently broader and deeper than at present, would still remain covered with water. Thus the waters would be divided."

The objections to this theory are of but little weight. 1. The theory requires a northeast wind, driving the waters down the Gulf; a wind directly east, blowing across the water would not lay bare the shoals; but the wind is said to have been "east," Ex. 14: 21. See, however, the note upon the verse. 2. It is said that the waters were "a wall" to Israel, Ex. 14: 22; and it is claimed that they must therefore have stood erect on either hand, as the wind could not have caused them to do. The objection is founded upon a misconception of the Hebrew idiom; see on the verse. 3. In the Song of Moses, Ex. 15: 8, it is said that the "depths were congealed;" and it is claimed that the wind would have no power to produce such an effect. The words are taken, however, from a highly figurative poem, and it were absurd to interpret them literally. See the note on Ex. 15: 8. For parallel boldness of figurative language, see Ps. 46: 6; 29: 6; 114: 4, 6; Hab. 3: 6, 10; 2: 11. 4. The Israelites, it is said, went over on "dry ground," Ex. 14: 22; but the winds would have no power to dry the bed of the sea after driving the waters from it. The original word, however, does not at all imply that the ground was dry in our sense of the term; see on the verse. 5. It is claimed that the returning waters would not have been deep enough on the shoals to drown the Egyptians. It is expressly stated, however, that their return was influenced not simply by the cessation of the wind, but by such a change of the wind as drove them back, Ex. 15: 10. The terrible storm is also described in Ps. 77: 15–20. The waters would return with greater force from having been heaped high by the action of the wind, Ex. 15: 8. 6. It is said that the Gulf is not wide enough at Suez to drown the hosts of Pharaoh, permitting none to escape, Ex. 14: 28. The best critics think it sufficiently wide, even at present. The eastern shore, however, has probably been filled in, rendering the waters more narrow. The shoals run obliquely across the sea, thus lengthening the distance to be traversed. 7. The theory which is here advocated is represented as a denial of the miracle. But the use of natural agencies, in conjunction with supernatural power, is common; the plagues of Egypt may be cited as instances. The knowledge of the intention of Pharaoh, the communication of his plan to Moses, the direction of the winds at the proper moments, and indeed the whole escape of the people, constituted exhibitions of Jehovah, not less decided or impressive that natural agencies were employed to a certain extent. The natural and the supernatural are not alien provinces in the divine government, The employment of natural agencies

19 AND the angel of God who went before the camp of Israel removed, and went behind them; and the pillar of

taught both Egyptians and Israelites that Jehovah was the supreme ruler of nature: both were corrupted with nature-worship, the religion of Egypt, and needed the lesson, Ex. 14 : 4, 17, 18; 32 : 1-30; Acts 7 : 40-43. The advocates of the theory which we here present are among the most devout believers in the supernatural character of the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of the Egyptians.

Some writers locate the passage a little lower down, south of the Jebel 'Attâkah, directly opposite the wells of Moses. The people would pass down the Wady et Tîh, with mountains on either hand, and Pharaoh behind. This theory is supposed to be supported by the name of the Wady et Tîh, which means the *valley* or *torrent-bed of wandering*, though the wanderings of Israel began much later; by the names of several places on this route, which are interpreted, not without some force-work, as memorials of the Exodus; by the statements of Josephus, who seems to favor it, but whose knowledge was not such as to render him an authority on such a point, and chiefly by the desire to magnify the miracle, which, it is thought, would be much more striking here than at Suez, where the waters are comparatively narrow and shallow, and hence more fully in accordance with the language of Scripture. The following decisive objections render the theory untenable: 1. It locates the land of Goshen further west than it could possibly have been, and places the Rameses from which the people started about six miles from Old Cairo, from which it was certainly much more distant, see on Ex. 1 : 11. 2. It places the first marches of the Israelites before they turned, Ex. 14 : 2, on a route that led between impassable heights to an impassable sea, and assigns no good reason for the turning. But the inspired narrative seems to imply that they placed themselves in the dilemma at the Red Sea only at the express command of Jehovah, and after having selected a feasible route, such as presented the best prospects to a military leader. 3. The Israelites could not have marched by this route to the Red Sea in three days, the interval which the language of the narrative seems to allow for the journey, see on Ex. 13 : 20; and see also Ex. 12 : 37; 13 : 20; 14 : 2; Num. 33 : 1-8. ROBINSON: "The usual day's march of the best appointed armies, both in ancient and modern times, is not estimated higher than fourteen miles; and it cannot be supposed that the Israelites, encumbered with women and children and flocks, would be able to accomplish more." But the distance, by the nearest route from Cairo to the Dead Sea, is not less than seventy miles, which would occupy an army five days. 4. There is almost no water on this route: and though possibly the Israelites might have carried a supply from the Nile, the horses of Pharaoh, Ex. 14 : 6-9, could not have performed the journey without an extra supply of water borne by camels, one camel-load hardly sufficing for three horses, as at present. The difficulty is very grave. 5. It is expressly stated that the sea was divided by means of a strong wind; but no wind, even though strong enough to absolutely destroy the Israelites, could open a passage through the deep waters at the place supposed. Those who advocate the theory under consideration find in the wind, not the means by which the waters were caused to go back, though the statement of Ex. 14 : 21 is explicit, but the mere symbol of the divine power, a view which the narrative before us pointedly condemns. 6. The Red Sea, at the place selected by those who adopt the theory in question, is about fourteen miles wide, a full day's march for an army of strong men. The Israelites are represented as crossing in a single night, Ex. 14 : 19-21, 24, 27. The Egyptians, also, had time to enter the passage, and march to "the midst of the sea," Ex. 14 : 23, the whole army being, at the return of the morning, between the two shores. It is scarcely possible that the Israelites, who numbered not less than two millions, encumbered as they were with children and herds and baggage, should have moved so rapidly in the face of "a vehement wind."

The Gulf is well described by ROBINSON; and, with the exception of its greater extension, it probably appeared to the Israelites much as it appears at the present day. "The Gulf of Suez, as seen from the adjacent hills, presents the appearance of a long strip of water, setting far up, like a large river through a desert valley of twenty or thirty miles in width; the shores skirted sometimes by arid plains, and sometimes interrupted by naked mountains and promontories on either side. The whole configuration reminded me strongly of the valley of the Nile on a larger scale; except that there the noble river bears fertility on its bosom, and scatters it abroad in lavish profusion, while here desolation reigns throughout."

19. **The angel of God.** The second person of the Trinity; see on Ex. 3 : 2. His special sphere of activity and manifestation was the pillar of cloud and fire.

The camp. The hosts of Israel; here first called a *camp*, because first presented as leading a camp-life.

The pillar. See on Ex. 13 : 21, 22. Both the angel of God and the pillar made the movement; for the two were united; the pillar was the abode of the angel. It probably changed its form, seeming a great cloud resting on the earth and stretching high, to the Israelites a miraculous cloud of light, to

cloud removed from before them and stood behind them,
20 and came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of
Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness [to those],
and it lightened the night [to these]; and the one came
not near the other all the night.
21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Je-
hovah caused the sea to go by a vehement east wind all the

the Egyptians a dark storm-cloud, which they connected with the strong wind. It must have extended far upon the earth to cover the whole broad host of Israel. JAMIESON: "The slow and silent movement of that majestic column through the air must have excited the astonishment of the Israelites, Isai. 58: 8."

20. **The camp of Egypt.** It was now night; and it is possible that the Egyptians had encamped, expecting to fall upon the fugitives the next morning. In this case, the movement of ver. 23 took place when they discovered that, contrary to all human probabilities, the Israelites were finding a passage through the waters. But while this is possible, it is not certain, as the Egyptian army is termed a "camp" even after it is on the march, ver. 24.

The camp of Israel. The Israelites had been surprised encamping by the sea, ver. 9. They were still in the camp, in the anguish and confusion of surprise, when the movement of the cloud took place.

There was the cloud and darkness. The night was thus rendered absolutely dark, so as to impede the movements of the Egyptians.

To those. The Egyptians.

To these. The Israelites.

The one came not near the other. The Israelites had abundant light; the Egyptians had absolute darkness. The movements of the former were facilitated; the movements of the latter hindered: otherwise, as the forces of Pharaoh were chiefly cavalry, vers. 7, 9, 23, and as the Israelites were for the most part necessarily on foot and encumbered with herds and baggage, the Egyptian pursuit, when once it began, ver. 23, would have speedily closed.

21. **Moses stretched out his hand.** He held the rod, ver. 16. Nothing is said of Aaron. God works in connection with human agencies, though those agencies are in themselves utterly inadequate. The recession of the waters at the command of Moses tended to restore his influence, which was imperilled by the apparent danger into which he had led the people, vers. 11, 12. It is always an honor for God to choose us as his instruments.

Artists, for the sake of grandeur, have represented the Red Sea as surrounded by lofty cliffs, and Moses as standing on one of these; but the shores near Suez, where the crossing of the Israelites probably took place, are sandy and undulating, presenting, however, many gentle eminences, on one of which Moses may have stood in the sight of the people.

A vehement east wind. The original word, here rendered *east*, is used with considerable latitude, and may refer to any easterly wind. A gale blowing from the northeast would be most apt to drive the waters down the Gulf and lay bare the sand-bars at Suez. Canon COOK: "It is thus distinctly stated that the agency by which the object was effected was natural. It is clear that Moses takes for granted that a strong east wind blowing through the night, under given circumstances, would make the passage quite possible." The wind is expressly said to have been vehement; it was therefore not a mere symbol of the divine power, but the agent through which that power wrought. In the darkness of the night, alleviated only by the light of the miraculous cloud, and in the roar of this hurricane, the Israelites passed from Africa into Asia.

Artists have sometimes represented the waters as separated to form a comparatively narrow lane, driven by a small but fierce column of wind. But the words of the text, naturally interpreted, refer to a general wind; and the space of sea-bottom laid bare must have been quite wide to admit the passage of two million people in a single night. It may have been, for aught we know, a mile, or two miles, in width. It is supposed, however, that a space half a mile wide would have been sufficient.

The sea. The Red Sea. The usual name in Hebrew means literally *the sea of weeds* or *rushes*, but from what peculiarity it arose we do not know. Our name, the *Red Sea*, is a literal rendering of the usual Greek appellation. Its origin is a matter of doubt. It is variously attributed to the red appearance of the mountains of the western coast, which look as if they were sprinkled with brick-

night, and made the sea bare ground; and the waters were
22 cleft asunder. And the sons of Israel came through the
midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a
23 wall for them on their right hand and on their left. And the
Egyptians pursued, and came after them, all Pharaoh's

dust; to this color reflected in the water; to its proximity to the territory of Edom, a name which means *red;* to the presence of red zoophytes in the water, imparting to it their color; to red coral; to red sea-weed; and to red storks, which have been seen there in great numbers. POOL, in Smith's Bible Dictionary, argues strongly for the derivation of the name from the red men, or Phœnicians, who once controlled its commerce. By the classical geographers the name was applied to all the waters washing the shores of the Arabian peninsula, and even to the Indian Ocean; but the Biblical name is always limited to what is now called the Gulf of Suez, a remarkable tongue of water, penetrating the land to a distance of one hundred and thirty miles, and to the similar but shorter gulf which bounds the other side of the Sinaitic peninsula. For the description of the former, see the essay connected with this lesson.

All the night. The wind blew, not merely to make a passage, but to keep it open till the Israelites had crossed, and the Egyptians had placed themselves in the midst of the sea. The continuity of a force, it is well known, greatly increases its efficiency. The regular recurring tread of a single regiment will endanger the stability of a suspension bridge which would not be affected by the mere weight of an army.

Bare ground. The *dry land* of the Common Version misleads. The original word refers merely to land as distinguished from water, and not to the absence of moisture from the soil, Gen. 7 : 22; 2 K. 2 : 8.

The waters were cleft asunder. Those below the shallows at Suez were driven down the gulf, and those above were confined, as would naturally be the case.

It is possible that the wind acted in concert with the ebb tide, and that the writer has not mentioned the state of the tide because the wind was the only unusual agency employed. See the preceding essay.

22. **The sons of Israel came.** It is impossible to determine the hour at which the passage began. If we suppose it was about ten o'clock, every condition of the narrative will be satisfied.

Dry ground. The original word is different from that rendered *bare ground* in the preceding verse; but it is used, in the same sense, for land in distinction from water; Gen. 1 : 9; Ex. 4 : 9; Jonah 1 : 9, 13; 2 : 10; Ps. 66 : 6.

A wall. The waters served the purpose of a fortification in preventing the Egyptians from attacking the people on one flank or the other. Both above and below the fords of Suez the water is deep. The same idiom is employed in Nahum 3 : 8, where the sea is said to have been the rampart and wall of populous No.

For them. These words indicate that the writer has in view the military utility of the waters, rather than their form. They served the Israelites as a defence; hence they were a wall "for them," though they had not the upright position of a fortification.

23. **The Egyptians pursued.** They would learn of the movement of the Israelites by the noise which must necessarily have accompanied it. Where there was a whole undisciplined people, with flocks and herds, concealment was, of course, impossible. The Egyptians, acquainted with the sea, and aware of the effect which a strong easterly wind might possibly produce, quickly interpreted the intention of the Israelites, broke up their camp, and started in pursuit. Their encamping in the evening was a providential circumstance, making preparations for the advance necessary, and giving the Israelites more time.

Came after them. We must not picture the Egyptians as rushing headlong in the pursuit, a fancy of those who forget that the night, and the double darkness caused by the interposition of the cloud, and the strange nature of the sea-bottom, must have rendered the army careful and its progress slow. The Israelites, however, to whom the cloud gave light, and who had every motive to haste, would proceed as rapidly as possible. And under circumstances of such urgency the weakest are endowed with almost superhuman strength. Their progress, encumbered as they were, was therefore probably as swift as that of their pursuers.

Horses, chariots, and horsemen. The cavalry first entered the sea, as they could advance faster than the infantry, which followed in the rear, ver. 28. The force must have been immense; see vers. 7, 9. It had probably been concentrated on the eastern frontier of Egypt by the stubborn king to

horses, his chariots, and his horsemen, into the midst of the sea. And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Jehovah looked out toward the camp of Egypt, in the pillar of fire and cloud, and confounded the camp of Egypt, and put away his chariot wheels and made him drive heavily.

watch the movements of the Israelites, whose preparations for departure he desired to check. But he had been deterred by the fearful plagues, from interfering forcibly. Now, however, he has mastered his fear, and sees revenge within his grasp.

Horses. Horses are mentioned on the monuments of Egypt as early as the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty. They were reared with great care, and Egypt became famous for them, exporting them in great numbers to neighboring nations, 1 K. 10 : 28, 29. But while horses are represented on the monuments, horsemen are not. The omission is difficult to explain, as we know from many other sources that they constituted an important part of the Egyptian army. Diodorus Siculus says that Rameses II., who flourished not long after the Exodus, had twenty-four thousand cavalry, besides his chariotry; and the technical expression for mounting on horseback is found in several ancient papyri. See also Isai. 31 : 1.

Chariots. The common Egyptian war-chariot was of simple construction and small cost. Rev. H. W. PHILLOTT: "It consisted, as appears both from Egyptian paintings and reliefs, as well as from an actual specimen preserved at Florence, of a nearly semicircular wooden frame with straightened sides, resting posteriorly on the axle-tree of a pair of wheels, and supporting a rail of wood attached to the frame by leathern thongs and one wooden upright in front. The floor of the car was made of rope net-work, intended to give a more springy footing to the occupants. The car was mounted from the back, which was open, and the sides were strengthened and ornamented with leather and metal bindings. Attached to the right-hand side, and crossing each other diagonally, were the bow-case, and the quiver and spear-case. If two persons were in the chariot, a second bow-case was added. The wheels, of which there were but two, had six spokes; they were fastened to the axle by a linch-pin secured by a thong. The driver stood on the off-side, and in discharging his arrows hung his whip from his wrist. In some instances the king is represented alone in his chariot, with the reins fastened round his body, thus using his weapons with his hands at liberty." The chariot-wheels were small, and the car was low. The royal chariots, and the chariots of the life-guard, like the six hundred mentioned in ver. 7, were highly ornamented and costly. Usually two persons rode in the chariot, one being the driver, and the other fully armed for battle; but the chariots of distinguished persons often held three, of whom the third carried the state umbrella. The Egyptian gentlemen and ladies used chariots in times of peace, as we use carriages. The chariots of Egypt were very famous. According to Diodorus Siculus, Rameses II. had twenty-seven thousand in his army. Rev. H. W. PHILLOTT: "The processes of manufacture of chariots and harness are fully illustrated by existing sculptures, in which also are represented the chariots used by neighboring nations."

24. **In the morning watch.** Before the Babylonish captivity the Israelites divided the night into three watches, the first watch, Lam. 2 : 19, the middle watch, Judg. 7 : 19, and the morning watch. We may reasonably suppose the time here mentioned to have been about daybreak, or five o'clock.

Jehovah looked. JAMIESON: "We suppose the fact to have been that the side of the pillar of cloud toward the Egyptians was suddenly and for a few moments illuminated with a blaze of light, which, coming as it were in a refulgent flash upon the dense darkness which had preceded, so frightened the horses of the pursuers, that they rushed confusedly together, and became unmanageable." The *trouble* of the Egyptians was a great panic; see the next verse. We have a more graphic statement of the scene in Ps. 77 : 15-20, from which we learn that a terrific storm of thunder and rain fell upon the pursuers. Both Josephus and Philo also speak of it. But for this the pursuers would probably have effected the passage. They had doubtless reasoned that the strong and persistent desert wind would be apt to blow for many hours, that the tide would not return till morning, and that hence there would be ample time. The tempest, by occasioning an unexpected detention, overthrew their hopes.

25. **Put away his chariot wheels.** The Egyptians were now in the midst of the sea, where perhaps the way was most difficult. In the confusion occasioned by the terrible *looking* of Jehovah from the dark cloud, the wheels were wrenched off and broken. Such accidents to the chariots of Egypt were by no means unusual, as is proved by the notices of them in the papyri. BROWN: "As a man is said to do what his servants do by his commands, so God is said to do what his works effect by his disposal."

And Egypt said: I must flee before Israel; for Jehovah fights for them against Egypt.

26 And Jehovah said to Moses: Stretch out thy hand over the sea, and the waters shall return upon Egypt, upon his
27 chariots, and upon his horsemen. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted state, as morning came on, and the Egyptians were fleeing against it, and Jehovah shook out the Egyptians into the
28 midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army that came after them into the sea; there was not left of

V. 25. *Or*, and drove him into difficulty.

Made him drive heavily. As the chariots were dragged upon the sand without wheels.

Egypt said, I must flee. Each man is represented as absorbed in his own desire to flee. The panic became universal.

Jehovah fights for them. They had supposed the dark cloud to be a natural cloud; they had entered the sea assured of overtaking and punishing the fugitives either during the passage or on the opposite shore. But in the awful *looking* of God and in the confusion which ensued, they beheld the evidence of a divine presence; they remembered the terrible plagues sent in the name of Jehovah, of whom they had not before known, Ex. 5 : 2, and whom they supposed to be the national God of the Israelites; and they recognized the hostility of this dread being.

26. **Jehovah said.** At the moment of panic, when the Egyptians were turning back to flee. The Israelites had by this time gained the Asiatic shore.

Stretch out thy hand. Holding the rod; comp. vers. 16 and 21.

The waters shall return. It was about the first of April, and full moon, by which the paschal season was ever after determined. Hence it is inferred that there was a spring-tide. A sudden cessation of the wind at sunrise, coinciding with this, would, in the words of Canon COOK, "immediately convert the low flat sand-banks first into a quicksand, and then into a mass of waters, in a time far less than would suffice for the escape of a single chariot, or horseman loaded with heavy corslet." Also, we are expressly told that the wind changed, blowing back the waters which they had kept at bay, Ex. 15 : 10.

27. **Returned to its wonted state.** No longer conquered by the violent wind, but returning with swift current and boisterous uproar.

Were fleeing against it. They had by this time turned back towards their own coast. It was necessary for them to bear against the current, which, judging from the conformation of the Egyptian shore, boiled around the headland of Suez; otherwise they would have been carried away by the force of the waters.

Shook out the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. They were hurled from their chariots and horses. The uncontrollable panic of the horses in the rushing waters made this inevitable. An ancient papyrus states that when the chariot in full speed is broken, the warrior is hurled out with such force that his armor is buried in the sand. This illustrates the expression of the text; only here the Egyptians were hurled into the water. See Ex. 15 : 4, where the original word rendered *cast* in the Common Version, is very forcible, like our word *hurled*.

28. **The chariots and the horsemen.** The cavalry. The fate of the infantry is not stated; but they would be less able to escape than the cavalry.

Even one. An explicit statement, for which the considerations adduced in the previous notes have fully prepared us. Under the circumstances, escape was impossible. Canon COOK: "A doubt has been raised whether Pharaoh himself perished; but independent of the distinct statement of the Psalmist, Ps. 136 : 15, his destruction is manifestly assumed, and was, in fact, inevitable. The station of the king was in the vanguard; on every monument the Pharaoh is represented as the leader of the army; and, allowing for Egyptian flattery on other occasions, that was his natural place in the pursuit of fugi-

29 them even one. And the sons of Israel went on the dry
ground through the midst of the sea; and the waters were
a wall for them, on their right hand and on their left.
30 And Jehovah on that day saved Israel out of the hand
of Egypt, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore
31 of the sea. And Israel saw the great hand with which
Jehovah wrought in Egypt; and the people feared Jehovah,
and believed in Jehovah, and in Moses his servant.

tives whom he hated so intensely. The death of the Pharaoh and the entire loss of the chariotry and cavalry accounts for the undisturbed retreat of the Israelites through a district then subject to Egypt and easily accessible to their forces. The blow to Egypt was not fatal, for the loss of men might not amount to many thousands, but, falling upon their king, their leaders, and the portion of the army indispensable for the prosecution of foreign wars, it crippled them effectually. If, as appears probable, Thotmes II. was the Pharaoh, the first recorded expedition into the peninsula took place seventeen years after his death; and twenty-two years elapsed before any measures were taken to recover the lost ascendency of Egypt in Syria. So complete, so marvellous, was the deliverance."

29. **And.** The happy escape of Israel is contrasted with the fate of the Egyptians.

Dry Ground. See on ver. 22.

A wall. See on v. 22.

The simplicity of these repetitions is admirably adapted to convey that sense of wonder which they were designed to express.

30. **Jehovah saved.** The rescue was a miracle. The Israelites did not save themselves.

Dead on the shore of the sea. The light-armed troops were probably alone washed up; most of the Egyptian horsemen and charioteers were, we know, encased in such heavy armor that they would be retained in the water. See Ex. 15 : 5, 10, where the sudden sinking of the mailed warriors is described as by an eye-witness.

31. The deliverance produced a threefold effect.

The people feared Jehovah. They were filled with reverential awe at the manifestation of his power and justice. This fear was mingled with but little love; hence it quickly departed.

Believed in Jehovah. On the previous day they had doubted his word, vers. 10–12.

And in Moses his servant. At whose command everything had been done, vers. 2, 15, 21, 27. By thus associating Moses with himself God established, more firmly than before, the authority of his servant, which had been imperilled, vers. 10–12.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Jesus may seem to forsake his people, but in reality he is watching for their deliverance, even at such moments, ver. 19.

2. Jesus will give light to those who go boldly forward in the path of duty, ver. 20.

3. All the difficulties which lie in the way of obedience to God depart when we approach them in faith, ver. 21.

4. The winds and the waves are in the hands of Our Father: therefore let us not fear their violence.

5. The same winds of sorrow that beat upon God's enemies may blow also in the faces of his friends; but to the former they "work out death," while to the latter they prove blessings in disguise, and bring deliverance from the bondage of sin, ver. 21.

6. God often turns the forces which we most dread into defences for his people, ver. 22.

7. The proudest kings and armies of the world shall prove but chaff if they set themselves against God, vers. 23–28. Are you resisting him in your heart? If so, what will become of you?

8. What terror one angry glance of Jesus will cause the soul of the impenitent at the last day, ver. 24.

9. Contrast the look which Jesus gave the Egyptians, ver. 24, and the look which he gave to Peter, Luke 22 : 61. Thus the glances which he will give his foes and his friends will be contrasted at the last day.

10. The honor of working with God, vers. 16, 26. God could have worked without Moses, but in

love he associated his servant with him in his great acts. Let us seek to work with God, that he may work with us, and reward our toil with glory hereafter.

11. It is not possible for one single soul, which rejects Christ, to escape retribution, ver. 28.

12. It is not possible for a single soul which obeys the gospel to be lost, ver. 29.

13. We cannot save ourselves; but Jesus is mighty to save, ver. 30. Let us call upon him and obey him.

14. When we experience any providential deliverance from misfortune, we should not forget to thank the Father who has sent it, ver. 31.

15. As the night of toil and terror led to the morning of joy and praise, so our earthly journey of sorrow will end, if we are Christ's, in a morning of eternal happiness, vers. 26–31.

LESSON X.—BITTER WATERS SWEETENED. CHAP. 15 : 22–27.

THE PENINSULA OF SINAI.

By crossing the Red Sea the Israelites completed what is termed the Exodus in the strictest sense. In the present lesson they take their first journeys in the Peninsula of Sinai, and advance towards the mountain of the Law. This is, therefore, the proper place to consider the general features of that remarkable region. The Peninsula of Sinai is a triangular area, situated between the two arms of what is known as the Red Sea. These arms are the Gulf of Suez, which is the Red Sea of the Exodus, and the Gulf of Akaba, the Red Sea of Num. 21 : 4. The crescent-like plateau of the Tîh forms its northern base. The Gulf of Suez, the southwestern side of this triangle, is about one hundred and ninety miles in length, and the Gulf of Akaba, the southeastern side, one hundred and thirty miles, while the base at the north is about one hundred and fifty miles long; giving an area of eleven thousand six hundred square miles, a little larger than that of Maryland. The district is exceedingly mountainous. The two gulfs are skirted with a flat strip of desert; and the base is occupied with a broad belt of sandstone, extending nearly from shore to shore, and putting forth occasional low and isolated mountains, having broad plateaux for their summits. But within these border lines is a triangular mass of mountains rising to sublimity near the apex at the sea. The highest peaks reach an elevation of eight or nine thousand feet. Here, amidst the grandest forms of desolation, is the Sinai of the Exodus. The mountain masses of this region are separated by plains and water beds, the latter called technically "wadies," and for the most part dry except when swollen with torrents during the rain-storms of winter. On the northwest, where the first marches of the Exodus were made, are the desert sands; but the soil soon becomes hard and mixed with gravel. It is at present comparatively unproductive, owing to the absence of water; yet the rivulets and springs which not unfrequently occur are fringed with verdure; the valleys, even where not blessed with perennial waters, bear a stunted vegetation; the more fertile spots nourish various hardy trees; the highlands and even the unwatered plains are thinly sprinkled with shrubs; and "the Jericho rose," says PALMER, "an extraordinary bibulous plant, which has the faculty of expanding when placed in water after lying in a cabinet for years, may be seen in the most unpromising spots." "The herbage in the valleys," the same author continues, "is of a pale sickly green, and in the summer season often so burned up that it crumbles to powder at the slightest touch. No visible effect is produced by all this vegetation upon the general desert aspect of the country." The absence of vegetation is in some measure compensated by the gorgeous coloring of the rocks and mountains, and the grandeur of their masses. STANLEY: "Red, with dark green, are the predominant hues: the two are most markedly combined in the long line of Jebel Mousa," the Sinai of the Bible, "as Pococke, with more than his usual observation, noticed long ago. These colors, especially in the neighborhood of Serbal, are diversified by the long streaks of purple which run over them from top to bottom." PALMER: "In some wadies the mountain sides are striped with innumerable veins of the most brilliant hues, thus producing an effect of color and fantastic design which it is impossible to describe. These effects are heightened by the peculiar clearness of the atmosphere and the dazzling brightness of the sunlight; one part of a mountain will glow with a ruddy or golden hue, while the rest is plunged in deepest shade. Sometimes a distant peak will seem to blend with the liquid azure of the sky, while another stands out in all the beauty of purple or violet tints; and, with what would seem the mere skeleton of a landscape, as beautiful effects are produced as if the bare rocks were clad with forests and vineyards, or capped with perpetual snows." The grandeur of these gorgeous masses is remarked by all travellers. Sir Frederick HENNIKER calls them "the Alps unclothed." ROBINSON was reminded by the scenery near Sinai "of the mountains around the Mer de Glace in Switzerland." PALMER: "The very nakedness of the rocks imparts to the scene a grandeur and beauty peculiarly its own. For, as there is no vegetation to soften down the rugged outlines of the mountains or conceal the nature of their formation, each rock stands out with its own distinctive shape and color as clearly as in some gigantic geological model map." Another characteristic is the confusion and complication of ridges

22 AND Moses caused Israel to break up from the Red Sea, and they came out into the wilderness of Shur; and they

and jagged peaks. This aspect is seen best from Jebel Mousa, from which the scene, says Sir Frederick HENNIKER, is as if "Arabia Petræa were an ocean of lava, which, whilst its waves were running mountains high, had suddenly stood still." Over this desolation broods a strange silence. STANLEY: "It is probably this, combined with the peculiarity of the atmosphere, that produces the deep stillness, and consequent reverberation of the human voice, which can never be omitted in any enumeration of the characteristics of Mount Sinai." In these regions the voice can be carried to an immense distance; and it is often multiplied by echoes like those of a cavern. This characteristic of the region must have rendered the solemn tones which accompanied the promulgation of the Law the more overwhelmingly awful. The climate is more severe than in other parts of Arabia. PALMER: "You have the extremes of heat and cold, frequently a difference of fifty degrees between the temperature of night and day; and there is little or no fuel to counteract the one, or shade to repel the other." Speaking of the cold season, the same writer says: "It was a very common experience for us to reach the top of a peak in a state of profuse perspiration, and five minutes later to stand there so benumbed with cold that we could scarcely hold a pencil or manipulate the screws of our instrument."

22. And Moses. The *so* of the Common Version should give place to the *and* of the Hebrew. Canon COOK: "The word *so* gives the impression of a closer connection with the preceding verse than is suggested by the Hebrew. The history of the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai begins, in fact, with this verse, which would more conveniently have been the commencement of another chapter."

Caused Israel. The influence of Moses was not only restored, but enhanced, by the events of the preceding lesson, and for a time the people gladly obeyed him.

To break up. The original refers to the breaking up of the encampment, preparatory to departure.

From the Red Sea. From the tops of the houses in Suez, the traveller may look across the Gulf and see some ten miles below on the opposite shore a green oasis, almost the only verdure which the eye commands. There are the 'Ayoun Mousa, or Fountains of Moses, where almost all critics, concurring with the Arab tradition, place the station at which the Israelites first paused after their deliverance from the Egyptians, to celebrate the event, and to refresh themselves from the fatigues of the fearful and glorious night. It is the only feasible camping-ground near, and there can be little question as to its identification with the resting-place of Israel. Robinson found seven wells; Stanley, seventeen; and Tischendorf, nineteen. The number probably varies, as it may be increased at any time by digging in the sand. The water is somewhat brackish; but it is drinkable, and is a favorite beverage with the richer inhabitants of Suez, who formerly built country houses and established gardens near the springs. Tischendorf describes a fine garden owned at present by the German consul. Suez is supplied with vegetables from this place. Numerous clumps of palm-trees occur, and afford a grateful shade. Robinson, following M. Monge, thinks that there was once an aqueduct extending two miles to the sea, that ships might be watered. In the time of Moses, the fountains would naturally be kept with great care by the Egyptians for the accommodation of commerce by both land and sea. We do not know how long the Israelites tarried in this delightful spot; but they probably paused for at least one day, to recover from the fatigues of forced marches, and to arrange for the more leisurely prosecution of their future journeys.

Shur. The word means *a wall*. The wilderness of Shur stretched from the Gulf of Suez toward the mountain region of the Sinaitic peninsula; but how far it extended it is impossible to determine. It constituted a part of the larger wilderness of Etham, Num. 33 : 8. It was a part of the Sinaitic possessions of Egypt; but it was not a part of Egypt in the stricter sense, being inhabited by tributary Arab tribes. It was on one of the direct routes from Palestine to Egypt; hence Hagar intended to pass through it on her return to her native country, Gen. 16 : 1, 7. It was always considered as one of the boundaries of Egypt, Gen. 25 : 18; 1 Sam. 15 : 7; 27 : 8. The name, *a wall*, is thus explained by HOLLAND: "Some twelve or fifteen miles from the coast, and parallel to it, runs Jebel er Râhah, appearing in the distance as a long flat-headed range of white cliffs, which forms, as it were, a wall enclosing the desert on the north." So also PALMER: "I doubt if a more suggestive description could possibly be given of this monotonous, waterless waste, the only impressive feature of which is the long *shur* or wall, which forms its northern limit." Canon COOK thinks that the name occurs in the Egyptian papyri.

They went three days. It is certain that their route was towards Sinai, its nearest objective point, Ex. 3 : 12. It is proper, therefore, to discuss here its general direction. HOLLAND has well stated the evidence in reference to the position of the Red Sea and the region of Sinai: "More

went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.
23 And they came to Marah, and could not drink water from
Marah; for it was bitter; therefore they called the name

than one author has attempted to prove that Mount Sinai was far away to the eastward in the Peninsula of Arabia, and that the Gulf of Akaba was the Red Sea of the Bible. What is there to prove that they are not right? A careful comparison of the geographical features of the Peninsula of Sinai with the history of the Exodus appears to afford abundant evidence that, whatever may be the general value of the traditions attaching to that region, they are at least right in pointing it out as the scene of that history. It is now pretty generally agreed that the portion of the land of Egypt occupied by the children of Israel must have lain to the northeast of that country, and that the land of Goshen probably comprised the district called El Wady, the fertile valley on the edge of the desert, through which now flows the fresh-water canal leading from the Nile to Ismailia. The starting-point of the Israelites cannot have been very far from the latter place. It appears from the history of the Exodus, Ex. 33, that the Red Sea was only three days' journey from that point; a distance which exactly agrees with that to the head of the Gulf of Suez, but which does not agree at all with the distance to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, which lies more than one hundred and fifty miles eastward. This seems to prove that the Gulf of Suez alone can possibly be the Red Sea of the Bible. Again, we know that when the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they kept down its shore, for, in Num. 33 : 10, we read of their 'encamping by the Red Sea,' after five days' journey, far too short a time for them to have reached the Gulf of Akaba, if, after crossing the Gulf of Suez, they had marched in that direction. A glance at the map shows that, if this point be once established, Mount Sinai must have been situated to the south of the long range of Jebel et Tîh, which forms a barrier, stretching across the whole breadth of the peninsula, from the head of one gulf to that of the other." The three days' journey of the text lay, therefore, along the Asiatic shore of the Gulf of Suez; but the road was some miles inland, and not immediately upon the beach.

Found no water. The wilderness was well known, and hence the people took with them from the Fountains of Moses a supply of water sufficient for three days' journey, which they could easily do. Observe, therefore, that they did not murmur at its absence from the way, which they had anticipated, but at the bitterness of that to which they at length came, ver. 23. A supply of water for three days would, of course, be limited; it would be used with economy: and at the appearance of an oasis, the remainder of it would be consumed at once, so that the people would approach the fresh supply with keen thirst.

23. **They came to Marah.** Eagerly expected as an important watering-place and the source of a fresh supply of water. The word Marah means *bitterness*; and the name was probably conferred by the Israelites in memory of their disappointment with the waters; for had it been the usual name by which the springs were known previous to the Exodus, the people would not have been surprised at the character of the waters. Most travellers identify 'Ain Hawwarah, a spring sixteen and a half hours from the Fountains of Moses, with the Marah of the text. ROBINSON: "The position of the spring and the nature of the country tally very exactly with this supposition." It is the first water on the route which the Israelites probably took; and it is but thirty-five miles from the Wells of Moses, an easy journey of three days for a host with baggage and cattle. It lies to the left of the road, on a large mound composed of a whitish rocky substance, formed apparently of the deposits of the fountain during the lapse of ages. ROBINSON: "No stream was flowing from it, though there are traces of running water round about. The basin is six or eight feet in diameter, and the water about two feet deep. The Arabs pronounce the water bitter, and consider it the worst in all these regions." HOLLAND: "It is surrounded by a thick calcareous deposit, which seems to prove that the water which flowed from it was at one time more abundant than it is at present." Hence no objection can be made on the ground that it affords a supply of water insufficient for the Israelites; it may have had a copious overflow. PALMER: "It is a solitary spring of bitter water, with a stunted palm-tree growing near it and affording a delicious shade. The quality of the water varies considerably at different times; and on the present occasion, it was not only drinkable but palatable. It is, however, only fair to state that Mr. Holland, who had visited the well on several former occasions, pronounced such purity of the water to be quite exceptional. The meaning, 'Fount of Destruction,' given to the name Hawârah by Dr. Robinson and all previous travellers, is, like the orthography, incorrect. The real name, Hawwârah, signifies a small pool, the water of which sinks into the soil, by little and little, leaving the residue unfit to drink, a description eminently applicable to the spring in question." The same writer elsewhere says: "The soil throughout this part of the country, being strongly impregnated with *natron*, produces none but bitter or brackish water."

And could not drink. They had been accustomed to the waters of the Nile, which are pro

24 of it Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, say-
25 ing: What shall we drink? And he cried to Jehovah, and Jehovah showed him a tree, and he cast it into the water, and the water became sweet. There he set for him a
26 statute and a judgment, and there he proved him; And he said: If thou shalt diligently hearken to the voice of

verbially sweet. The Arabs of the desert use the brackish water, but to those who are unaccustomed to it the taste is quite unpleasant, though it satisfies thirst. Even they, however, avoid the water of 'Ain Hawwárah, when it is possible.

24. **The people murmured.** They were greatly disappointed. Experience has demonstrated that none are so quick to murmur at the unexpected absence of comforts to which they have been accustomed as those who have been accustomed to but few comforts.

Against Moses. But three days before they were his enthusiastic admirers, Ex. 14 : 31. The whole history of the Exodus shows us the ignobility and childishness to which the Israelites had been reduced by their bondage. Instead of regarding their great leader as a disinterested patriot, they treated him as one who had brought them from Egypt for some advantage of his own and who was therefore justly responsible for every petty privation of the way.

25. **Cried to Jehovah.** In earnest prayer.

A tree. ROBINSON: "It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that the Hebrew original, like the English Version, has here only the general word for 'tree,' and, therefore, all speculations as to the name of a particular plant only rest on air." The fountain of Hawwárah is surrounded by many bushes of the shrub Ghúrkúd. ROBINSON describes this shrub as "low and thorny, producing a small fruit which ripens in June, not unlike the barberry, very juicy, and slightly acidulous." He says: "It seems to delight in a saline soil; for we found it growing around all the brackish fountains which we afterwards fell in with during our journeys in and around Palestine." Burkhardt first suggested that the Israelites may have rendered the waters of Marah palatable by mingling with it the juice of these berries. As the waters were alkaline, the acid would, he thinks, correct them. ROBINSON: "The process would be a very simple one, and doubtless effectual; and the presence of this shrub around all brackish fountains would cause the remedy to be always at hand." The objections to this theory are cogent: 1. The narrative of the text seems to imply, even though it does not positively assert, that the healing of the water was the result of miraculous power. 2. ROBINSON: "As the Israelites broke up from Egypt on the morrow of Easter, and reached Marah apparently not more than two or three weeks later, the season for these berries would hardly have arrived." They ripen in June. 3. Had the Israelites been shown such a means of correcting alkaline water, its eminent usefulness would probably have prevented its loss from the traditions of the desert. But Robinson and others have made diligent inquiry whether the Arabs now know any such method of rendering the bitter waters of the desert palatable, by using the juice of berries, or the bark or leaves of any tree or plant; and it is certain that the present inhabitants of the desert know nothing of it. 4. The inspired record speaks of a tree, and not of berries.

He set. Jehovah is referred to.

For him. For Israel, as the next verse shows.

A statute. The original word means primarily a form of words engraved on a hard substance, as stone, and hence any fixed edict or decree or law.

A judgment. The original word means primarily a judicial decision, and hence a law as the rule of judicial decisions.

The substance of the statute and ordinance is given in the next verse.

There he proved him. The bitterness of the waters served, in the words of MURPHY, as a "touchstone to test their hearts, to discover what qualities or dispositions were within, to try whether they had the beginning of faith and penitence." See Gen. 22 : 1. The trial revealed to them their weakness and wickedness, and should have led them to God in shame for strength and righteousness. It came at the very beginning of the desert life; for that life was to be one of discipline in faith. It was a mild trial, for God tempers his trials to our weakness, and the Israelites were as yet capable of but little endurance.

26. **He said.** Canon Cook: "The Lord then set before them the fundamental principle of implicit trust to be shown by obedience." Two things are required: 1. *To diligently hearken, to give ear;* and 2. *To do that which is right, to keep all the statutes of God.* The requirements are twice uttered, in the form of Hebrew parallelism, that they may be the more impressive.

Jehovah thy God, and do what is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, none of the diseases which I laid upon Egypt will I lay upon thee, for I am Jehovah, thy physician.

27 And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of

None of the diseases. The Israelites possessed a knowledge of future rewards and punishments; for this was one of the fundamental doctrines of the Egyptian religion ; but in their degraded and unspiritual state they could be more deeply moved by the prospect of temporal rewards and punishments. Hence God appeals to their desire of present security and happiness, a desire which had been manifested in their murmurings on account of a slight deprivation of comfort. Observe how kindly he states the case : instead of putting his words into the form of a threat, he puts them into the form of a promise which at once veils and suggests the threat.

Which I laid upon Egypt. The plagues, culminating in the terrible loss of the first-born.

I am Jehovah, thy physician. I do not desire your punishment, but your happiness. The words were a further assurance that God was disposed to be lenient and merciful rather than exacting.

27. **Elim.** The name means *the trees*, and was probably conferred with reference to the grateful shade of the palms. HOLLAND says, after describing Marah: "Five miles farther south the road descends to Wady Gharundel, a broad valley enclosed on either side by steep banks, running down from the Tih plateau. Just below the point where the road crosses it several water-holes are found, which have been frequently described. But it is not generally known how large a supply of water is found about two miles lower down the wady. A stream here gradually oozes out from the bed of the wady, and soon forms considerable pools of water, which are overgrown with rushes, and afford a favorite resort for wild-ducks and many other birds. An abundant supply of water is to be found here during the whole year. The banks of the stream and the dry pools from which the water has evaporated, are often covered with a white deposit of natron, and the standing water is brackish and unwholesome; but, when running briskly, and freshly drawn, it is very drinkable ; and the traveller's water-skins are generally filled here on his way to and from the south." In the rainy season these waters become a torrent rushing into the Red Sea. There is abundance of thick and tall grass, of brushwood, of tamarisks, and of acacias ; and there are a few palm-trees, the representatives of the three score and ten found by the chosen people. In fact, for a considerable distance beyond this station, throughout the district between it and the encampment by the sea mentioned in Num. 33 : 10, the grass and water are good ; and there are palm-trees, tarfa-trees, tamarisks, and other shrubs.

This beautiful valley is but about seven miles from Marah ; and this circumstance has been advanced as an objection to its identification with the Elim of the text. But it is altogether probable that after three days of hard marching the next journey, if possible, would be brief, and that the obvious advantages of the situation, when it was reached, would lead to an encampment. Indeed, the Israelites seem to have remained some time in its neighborhood, since they did not come into the wilderness of Sin for some ten weeks after crossing the Red Sea, Ex. 16 : 1.

Palm-trees. We use this name as the designation of many different species ; of which the Scriptures know but one, the date-palm. The date-palm was once abundant in Palestine and the adjacent countries, which were celebrated for its production. Hence Vespasian represented Palestine on his coin by the emblem of a palm-tree. Hence, also, the Hebrew word entered into the names of many places, as Hazazan Tamar, Baal Tamar, Tadmor. It was also a favorite name for daughters ; there are three Tamars mentioned in the Old Testament. The palm was represented, probably in relief, on the walls and doors of Solomon's Temple, 1 K. 6 : 29, 32, 55 ; 7 : 36. The palm supplied a beautiful image for the poet, Cant. 7 : 7, 8 ; Ps. 92 : 12 ; Rev. 7 : 9. The industrial and domestic uses of the palm, which were very numerous, are scarcely alluded to in the Scriptures; yet we know from other sources that its fruit was employed as a delicious food, and that wine and also a sort of honey were made from it. The use of the branches as symbols of victory and joy was common, John 12 : 13 ; Rev. 7 : 9. The palm is now comparatively rare in Palestine ; it has shared the melancholy fate of the land of which it was the emblem. It is also much less abundant in neighboring countries and in the Peninsula of Sinai than it was inantiquity.

KURTZ : "Marah was the representative of the desert, so far as the desert was the scene of trial and discipline. Elim, so far as it was the place in which a covenant was made with God, and his gracious guidance was enjoyed. Elim was a place expressly prepared for Israel; for it bore the characteristic mark of the nation in the number of its wells and palm-trees ; there was a well for every tribe, ready to refresh man and beast, and the shade of a palm-tree for the tent of every one of the elders of the people, Ex. 24 : 9."

water, and seventy palm trees. And they encamped there by the water.

Springs of water. The original word means natural springs or fountains; it is different from that used to designate wells formed by digging in the earth. We know that the water-supply of the desert was formerly much more abundant than it is now; and these twelve springs were probably copious and perennial. See the essay prefixed to the next lesson.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. How often, after a precious experience of God's presence, the Christian soul falls into trial and despondency; after the Red Sea, there is the thirsty wilderness and the bitter Marah. The Christian pilgrimage has its trials, as well as its triumphs, vers. 22-24.

2. God proves us by trials: 1. To reveal us to ourselves, that we may not be proud of apparent virtues, which are the result of favorable circumstances, and which a change of circumstances may prove to have no strength; thus are we divested of self-righteousness and made ashamed and penitent. 2. To teach us that our salvation is in him, and to lead us to call upon him for the aid which we need. 3. To strengthen our good principles by exercise.

3. How often, after such a trial, God leads us into green pasture, and beside the still waters. After every Marah there is an Elim, ver. 27.

4. Even the bitter waters of sorrow, if God sanctify them by his grace, may become sweet and wholesome to the soul, ver. 25. In all our griefs let us therefore seek the divine assistance, as Moses cried unto Jehovah, and received the remedy which he desired.

5. It is a sin to murmur without reason against those whom God has made our spiritual guides, ver. 24. Nay, even when there seems to be good reason for criticism, we should remember that ministers and Sabbath-school teachers are but imperfect souls, needing our charity and sympathy rather than our complaints.

6. Ministers and teachers labor not for a selfish purpose; they often perform their duties at the cost of worldly convenience, and even of fortune; and we should, therefore, assist them with our sympathy, instead of annoying them with murmurs, ver. 24.

7. How patient God is with the faults of his people, vers. 24-26.

8. God does not desire to punish us with earthly misfortune; and if we live near to him, there will be the less occasion for him to chastise us, ver. 26.

9. God desires to heal all our infirmities of soul, ver. 26. Let us, therefore, take them to him, and invoke his aid.

10. God will not only bless his faithful and obedient people here, but hereafter he will confer upon them all the eternal bliss of heaven, ver. 26.

11. God requires of you: 1. To give impartial and earnest attention to his words, throwing aside prejudice, and sincerely desiring to know his will; and 2. To obey that which he commands. Those who diligently strive to comply with these requirements receive his blessing.

12. If men become infidels, it is usually because they do not give the gospel their unprejudiced and earnest study; sincere and diligent investigation of its evidences will always lead to the conviction of its truth, ver. 26.

13. It is not enough to hear and believe the gospel; we must also obey it, ver. 26.

LESSON XI.—BREAD FROM HEAVEN. CHAP. 16: 1-5, 31-35.

THE SUSTENANCE OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

It is frequently asked, How did the Israelites, with their vast herds, subsist in the wilderness?

I. Their cattle, of which they had great abundance, Ex. 34: 3; Num. 20: 19; 32: 1, afforded a taste of milk and flesh. From Deut. 2: 6, 7, 26-29, it is evident that they purchased provisions to some extent from the neighboring tribes; and Ps. 74: 14 seems to allude to a supply of fish, possibly from the Gulf of Akabah, where the people were encamped at one time, Num. 33: 35, and possibly for many years of their desert life, whose history the sacred writer has not recorded. The vegetation of the wilderness, which is discussed below, paragraph III., contributed further to the sustenance of the wanderers. It should also be observed, that their training in Egypt, where they were accustomed to irrigate their grounds by artificial means, prepared them to turn to the best account such supplies of water as they possessed. They may have even employed them in the partial cultivation of the more fertile spots, as the Arabs do at present. The complaints of Ex. 16: 2, 3 must be supposed to refer to the scarcity of such

ordinary food, and not to an absolute famine; for the manna was not yet given. But such limited resources were inadequate to the necessities of the multitude; and the sacred writer states repeatedly and explicitly that the deficiency was supplied by miracle, Ex. 16: 4–36; Deut. 8: 3; Josh. 5: 12. The miracles by which the nation was delivered from thirst and hunger were probably very frequent, the few recorded in the Scriptures having been mentioned as specimens of mercies which continually occurred, Jud. 5: 4 ff.; Ps. 68: 7 ff., and which Moses was precluded from mentioning by his plan of keeping silence concerning the thirty-eight years of the wandering.

II. The Israelites brought abundance of clothing from Egypt, Ex. 3: 22; 11: 2; 12: 35, 36. They also brought money and jewels with which they could purchase garments from the native inhabitants, or from the merchant caravans, many of which must have passed along the frequented routes of trade through the wilderness. The wool of the sheep and the skins of the flocks and herds could be employed in the manufacture of apparel. There was, moreover, a special providence which preserved the garments of the people, Deut. 8: 4. As the multitudes did not increase in number during their desert-life, comp. Num. 1: 46 and Num. 26: 51, their clothing was the more easily provided.

III. The flocks and herds seem to have been supported almost wholly by the ordinary agencies of nature; for, except in two instances, Ex. 17: 1–7, Num. 20: 2–11, no miracle or special providence is mentioned in connection with their sustenance. The recent explorations of the desert have done much to remove the difficulty. 1. Rev. F. W. HOLLAND, perhaps the very best recent authority, speaks of the Wilderness of Shur, the first barren tract traversed by the Israelites, as being not wholly sterile: "The want of pasturage for the flocks of the Israelites, especially at this point in their journey, has always appeared to be one of the greatest difficulties in connection with their march. Travellers have generally described this Wilderness of Shur as a hard, barren plain, with here and there a few shrubs, but utterly incapable of supplying any herbage. Such is the character of the higher portion of the plain, across which the road usually followed leads; but, on approaching the sea, and keeping near the shore, a broad tract of alluvial deposit is found, which affords extensive pasturage, and forms a favorite feeding-ground for the young camels of the Terabein Arabs." He says of the country in general: "Even now it is not so barren as it has generally been described. The observations of travellers on this point have been chiefly confined to a few of the main valleys and principal mountains; but it is not till one has wandered off the beaten tracks, and explored the slopes of the lower mountains and the less frequented wadys, that one can really arrive at a just estimate of the supply of water and the capabilities of the country for affording pasturage." 2. The supply of vegetation, in both its smaller and its larger forms, was certainly more abundant formerly than it is now. The more mountainous parts of the wilderness are remarkable for remains of ancient Egyptian mines of turquoise, iron, manganese and copper. HOLLAND: "Mining operations must have been carried on over a large area of the peninsula; and, since the smelting of the ore must have required a great amount of fuel, it is very probable that the fertility of the country has been much decreased by the destruction of the trees for this purpose." "It is hardly probable that the Israelites themselves would have passed a year in an enemy's country, knowing that they were to march onward, without adding largely to this destruction. Their need of fuel must have been great, and they would not hesitate to cut down trees and lay waste the gardens; and thus, before they journeyed onward from Mount Sinai, they may have caused a complete change in the face of the surrounding country." The protracted residence of the Israelites in other parts of the wilderness was probably attended by a similar destruction of the trees. But if the vegetation was formerly more prolific, the water must necessarily have been more abundant, in order to its support. The destruction of the timber has been followed by a diminution of the rain-fall, such as is often produced by the denudation of forest-lands. And, moreover, the absence of forests renders the present scant rain-fall of but little use as a fertilizer; for it now sweeps down the mountains and valleys in destructive floods, not remaining on the ground sufficiently long to supply its thirst; but when trees were abundant, they must have broken the force of the torrents and retained the moisture. All travellers testify that the soil of the desert, even in the most sandy districts, is capable of sustaining an abundant vegetation where water is supplied. The fresh-water canal constructed by Lesseps along the great Suez canal, is bordered by grass and weeds; and the village of Ismailia, which has sprung up at its terminus in the heart of the desert, is surrounded by gardens. HOLLAND speaks of "the marvellous effect that water has in producing vegetation in the most barren desert" as exemplified at Engi el fûl, which many identify with the Elim of Exodus, where the soil "produces a luxuriant crop of grass and other herbs." The country itself in some places affords evidence that the supply of water was formerly more abundant. Thus the well Hawwârah, which is probably the Marah of the Exodus, "is surrounded," says HOLLAND, "by a thick calcareous deposit, which seems to prove that the water which flowed from it was at one time more abundant than it is at present." The same traveller describes the remains of primitive houses, probably the residences of the Amalekites, Ex. 17: 8–16; Deut. 25: 17–19, and, in connection with these ruins, the traces of ancient gardens. 3. The Israelites were doubtless scattered over a large extent of country in the wilderness for convenience of pasturage, so that no one spot sustained their herds. And hence the divine arrangement that the pillar of fire and cloud should constitute a signal for the rest

1 AND they broke up from Elim, and came, all the congregation of the sons of Israel, to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the

and the march of the people. Had they constituted a compact body, there would have been no occasion for such a miracle; but since there were detachments of shepherds and herdsmen in many directions, a guide was provided which all, however distant, could behold. PORTER: "On one occasion I rode for two successive days through the flocks of a section of the Amazeh tribe, and the encampment of the chief was then at a noted fountain thirty miles distant, at right angles to my course; yet the country was swarming with men and women, boys and girls, looking after the cattle." He adds, with special reference to the Israelites, "The camp would be a mere nucleus; yet, as being the headquarters of the nation, containing the tabernacle, the priests and the chiefs, and forming the rallying-point of the warriors, it was the only place with which the sacred historian was concerned." Canon COOK: "The encampments named Num. 33: 18-36, would be various spots at which in the course of these years the tabernacle was for a time pitched; and possibly in ver. 22, 'Kehelathah,' *assembling*, and ver. 25, 'Makheloth,' *assemblies*, may be names bestowed because of some extraordinary though temporary gatherings of the Israelites there." 4. The cattle were probably utilized as water carriers during the more protracted journeys of the Exodus. E. H. PALMER: "The difficulty of providing water for the cattle has proved a great stumbling-block to many; but this Mr. HOLLAND has considerably lessened by a novel and ingenious suggestion. He believes that, instead of being an incumbrance to the movements of the host, they were used as beasts of burden, and that, in addition to the camp furniture, each carried its own supply of water, sufficient for several days, in water-skins slung at its sides, precisely as Sir Samuel BAKER found them doing at the present day in Abyssinia." 5. The water of the desert at any time might be greatly increased by digging wells in the yielding soil. The Fountains of Moses, which probably mark the first halting-place of the Israelites after the passage of the Red Sea, are described by HOLLAND as "springs or pools, most of which have been artificially formed by digging a few feet down in the sand." The wells of Abu Suweirah, in the wilderness of Shur, are "mere holes dug in the bed of a water course." HOLLAND adds: "Doubtless other wells might easily be sunk in the neighborhood, with equal prospects of finding water."

1. **They broke up.** See on Ex. 15: 22. They broke up after resting a considerable time in the neighborhood, else they would have reached the Wilderness of Sin sooner; see below.

From Elim. Pausing at the Red Sea, possibly for days, Num. 33: 10, 11.

All the congregation. It was a general movement. Some of the movements may have been confined to single detachments or to the headquarters of the people; hence this is marked as general.

Sin. The meaning is *mire, clay;* and if, as is probable, the wilderness stretched along the shores of the Red Sea, the reedy and miry character of a portion of it may have suggested the name. The Wilderness of Sin must be carefully distinguished from the Wilderness of Zin, Num. 13: 21; 20: 1, etc., and from the Egyptian city of Sin, Ezek. 30: 15.

Between Elim and Sinai. We are not to understand that it began at Elim and terminated at Sinai; but only that it was one of the districts traversed between the two places. From Num. 33: 10, 11, we learn that it was entered after leaving the station at the Red Sea beyond Elim; and from Ex. 17: 1 and Num. 33: 12, that after leaving it, the people camped at Dophkah, Alush, and Rephidim, before coming to the Wilderness of Sinai. The best and most recent authorities find the Desert of Sin in a long plain that borders upon the Gulf of Suez, running from near Ras Zelimeh, probably the station by the Red Sea, Num. 33, to the extremity of the peninsula at Ras Muhammed. KURTZ: "The sandy plain, on which there is a great quantity of vegetation, runs along by the sea-shore for three or four miles, and is about three-quarters of a mile in breadth; but after this the rocky wall approaches so nearly to the sea that it is only at the ebb that there is any road at all. The road then leads into a much more extensive desert plain, which is of considerable breadth. The present name of the plain is El Kaa, and it is probable that the Wilderness of Sin had the same boundaries. The halting-place of the children of Israel must be sought for in the northern part of this desert plain, probably near to the spot where the fountain of Murkhah still offers to the traveller a resting-place abundantly supplied with drinkable water." The route for twenty-five miles lay along the coast to the Wady Feiran, which afforded a good road from the sea to the mountainous district of the interior. After leaving the spring of Murkhah, water is scarce; but we have already seen that the Israelites had facilities for carrying sufficient for three days, Ex. 15: 22, which would be an ample provision for the present route. Some fifteen days were probably spent between Elim and Mount Sinai; comp. Ex. 16: 1 and 19: 1; but the delays were doubtless at the favorable positions at either end of the route, while the more barren intermediate portions were traversed rapidly. We may decide, then, with little doubt, that the manna was first found on the plain by the shores of the sea.

second month after they came out of the land of Egypt.
2 And all the congregation of the sons of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, in the wilderness.
3 And the sons of Israel said to them: O that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we ate bread to the full! For ye have brought us out into this wilderness to kill all this assembly with hunger.
4 And Jehovah said to Moses: Behold, I will rain bread for you from Heaven; and the people shall go forth and gather the day's portion each day, that I may prove them, whether
5 they will walk in my law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day, that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

The fifteenth day of the second month. Six weeks after the departure from Egypt. Their long sojourn in the neighborhood of Elim, which Tischendorf describes as beautiful and fertile beyond comparison, and at the Red Sea, must have been a grateful refreshment after the hardships of the way.

2. **All the congregation.** The feeling pervaded all classes; even the chief men participated.

Murmured. The food which had been brought from Egypt was probably exhausted; for six weeks had now passed. There is no notice of any previous deficiency. Were the people to blame for murmuring in the face of starvation? Yes. Their wonderful experience of God's mercy should have taught them that he was ready, in answer to prayer, to supply all their wants. Instead of murmuring, they should have prayed.

Against Moses and against Aaron. The murmuring took this form; but in reality it was directed against Jehovah, whose ministers they were; see ver. 8.

3. **By the hand of Jehovah.** Referring to the Egyptian plagues, and specially to the death of the first-born. Such a fate seemed preferable to the starvation which in their want of faith they believed to be their destiny.

Flesh-pots. The original-word is from the Egyptian, and refers to the vessels in which flesh was cooked. The language of the people furnishes evidence of their degradation in Egypt: they "sat by" the flesh-pots, eating from the vessel in which the food was cooked, as only the lower classes would do. It furnishes evidence also, that they were comparatively well fed, either by the Egyptian government, or by the produce of their own district, or by both.

To kill. A cruel accusation, and doubly inexcusable, since they had experienced such signal mercies.

4. **Rain bread....from heaven.** The supply was to be strictly supernatural.

The day's portion each day. That is, the quantity sufficient for one day. None was to be left over for the use of the morrow, vers. 19-21.

That I may prove them. The restriction of each day's supply to the wants of that particular day, was a trial of the faith of the people, since it obliged them to trust God for the morrow.

Whether they will walk in my law. The root of all obedience is faith in God; hence a trial of the Israelite's faith was also a trial of his disposition to obey.

5. **On the sixth day.** Because the morrow would be the Sabbath, on which it was unlawful to work. This shows that the Sabbath was known to the Israelites before the giving of the law. The institution had doubtless been handed down from the earliest times and observed by the patriarchs.

It shall be twice as much. That is, the people were to gather twice as much, ver. 22.

The mercy of God sent not only manna, but quails, birds such as may be frequently found in the peninsula, where they fly low so as to be easily caught, or, as probably occurred in the present instance, drop upon the earth, helpless with the fatigue of a long flight over the sea, vers. 6, 13. These mercies were preceded by an awful display of divine glory from the cloud, which seems to have removed and

31 And the house of Israel called the name of it manna:

rested on the horizon afar, glowing with terrible brightness and speaking with a voice of thunder, vers. 9–12. The people, in the very presence of the miraculous bread, neglected the directions of God concerning its use, so that Moses was reasonably impatient with such hardness of heart, vers. 16–20. His reproofs and their own experience soon restored them to obedience, ver. 21. The manna was made the means of reminding the Israelites of the obligations of the Sabbath, vers. 22–26, obligations which some denied, ver. 27, for which they were rebuked, vers. 28, 29, after which they manifested a greater conformity to the divine will, ver. 30.

31. **House.** Household. The nation was sometimes regarded poetically as a single family until the latest period, Matt. 10 : 6; Acts 2 : 36; Heb. 8 : 8.

Manna. The derivation of this word has until recently been in dispute. The Old Versions render the expression of ver. 15, which in the Common Version reads *It is manna*, interrogatingly, thus: *What is this?* And the word *manna* would thus be a name derived from the question. Later Oriental scholars have dissented from this view, and understand by the word *manna*, a *gift* or *portion:* according to their view the people said, *This is a gift.* But it has been recently shown that the word is from the Egyptian. *Man*, the equivalent of *manna*, and *man-hut*, *white manna*, occur upon the monuments as designations of a substance which resembled the manna of the Israelites in the size, the form, the color, and the taste of its particles. In other respects it differed; but the resemblance was so great that when the miraculous bread from heaven was first seen, the people exclaimed *It is manna*, giving it the name of the substance with which they had been well acquainted in Egypt, though surprised to find it spread upon the earth in the wilderness.

The manna of Egyptian commerce was found chiefly in the Peninsula of Sinai. Canon COOK: "It is the sweet juice of the tarfa, a species of tamarisk. It exudes from the trunk and branches in hot weather, and forms small round grains. In cool weather it preserves its consistency; in hot weather it melts rapidly. It is either gathered from the twigs of the tamarisk, or from the fallen leaves under the tree. The color is grayish yellow. It begins to exude in May, and lasts about six weeks. The Arabs cleanse it from leaves and dirt, boil it down, strain it through coarse stuff, and keep it in leather bags; they use it as honey with bread. Its taste is sweet, with a slight aromatic flavor; travellers generally compare it with honey. According to Ehrenberg it is produced by the puncture of an insect. It is abundant in rainy seasons; many years it ceases altogether. The whole quantity now produced in a single year does not exceed six or seven hundred pounds. It is found in the district between the Wady Gharundel, *i. e.*, Elim, and Sinai, in the Wady Sheikh, and in some other parts of the peninsula. For each of these statements we have the concurrent testimony of travellers. The resemblance in color, shape, taste, and in the time and place of appearance is exact. The name is also that now given to the product, well known as its Arabic designation, and found also on Egyptian monuments.

"The differences, however, are equally unmistakable. 1. The manna of Exodus was not found under the tamarisk tree, but on the surface of the wilderness, after the disappearance of the morning dew. 2. The quantity which was gathered in a single day far exceeded the annual produce at present, and probably at the time of Moses. 3. The supply ceased on the Sabbath day. 4. The properties differed from common manna; it could be ground, baked, and in other respects treated like meal. It was not used merely as a condiment, or medicine, but had the nutritive qualities of bread. 5. It was found after leaving the district where it is now produced, until the Israelites reached the land of Canaan.

"It is to be observed that we have all the conditions and characteristics of divine interpositions. 1. The condition of a recognized necessity: for all writers agree that under any conceivable circumstances the preservation of the Israelites would otherwise have been impossible. 2. The condition of a harmony with a divine purpose, the preservation of a peculiar people on which the whole scheme of providential government and the salvation of mankind depended. 3. We have the usual characteristics of harmony between the natural order of events and the supernatural transaction. God fed his people not with the food which belonged to other regions, but with such as appertained to the district. The local coloring is unmistakable. We may not attempt to give an explanation how the change was effected; to such a question we have but to answer that we know nothing."

The manna of the miracle also differed from that of commerce in its mysterious increase and decrease, ver. 18, in its putrefaction, when preserved, and in its appearance at all seasons of the year. The ancient production of the natural manna was probably greater than the modern, as the peninsula was more fertile; but, in the best period, the production of a season must have been quite limited, and far less than would suffice to feed two million people for a single day. The manna has, moreover, but little nutritive value, and no one can safely make it the chief article of his diet.

Like coriander seed. In form, Num. 11 : 7. It was globular. The common coriander seed, such as is used by confectioners and druggists, is probably meant; it is found in Egypt, and the Israelites were doubtless well acquainted with it.

and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste like a cake with honey.

32 And Moses said: This is the thing which Jehovah has commanded. The omer full of it is to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread which I gave you to eat in the wilderness, when I brought you forth out
33 of the land of Egypt. And Moses said to Aaron: Take a pot, and put therein an omer full of manna, and lay it away before Jehovah, to be kept for your generations.
34 Even as Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it away before the Testimony to be kept.

35 And the sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came into a land to be inhabited: they ate manna until they came into the edge of the land of Canaan.

White. In color. It is also compared, in Num. 11 : 7, 8, to *bdellium*, a substance concerning which we know nothing.

Like a cake with honey. In taste. It is uncertain whether the kind of cake alluded to was that in which the honey was mixed with the dough, or that on which the honey was spread after baking. The taste would be much the same in either case. The text probably describes the raw manna; when cooked it tasted like "oil cates," "fresh oil" from the olive, Num. 11 : 8.

32. **Moses said.** Probably after the erection of the Tabernacle. The writer sketches the history of the manna from its first appearance till its cessation, ver. 35. From ver. 34 it is inferred that the command to preserve the manna was not given till the place for its preservation was provided.

Omer. A measure estimated by the Rabbins to have contained about three pints, and by Josephus about three quarts.

Kept. How long the manna was thus preserved it is impossible to determine. We are only certain that it disappeared before the erection of Solomon's Temple, 1 K. 8 : 9.

33. **A pot.** The original word is not used elsewhere. The Septuagint translators and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 9 : 4, understood a golden pot or jar.

34. **Testimony.** The law written on tables of stone, and deposited in the ark, Ex. 25 : 16, which was thence called the "ark of the testimony." The law was the testimony of God's will to man. The manna was placed near it in the ark, Heb. 9 : 4. The phrase *before Jehovah* in the preceding verse is equivalent to the phrase *before the testimony* in the present verse.

35. **Did eat manna for forty years.** It is not stated that this was the only food of the Israelites. It was undoubtedly, however, their chief sustenance, occupying the place of bread, ver. 15. The termination of the manna is recorded in Josh. 5 : 12.

A land to be inhabited. Palestine. It is termed *a land to be inhabited*, because the Israelites were about to possess it when the manna ceased, and also in contrast with the wilderness, in which they were wanderers, and not permanent inhabitants.

Until they came into the edge. Joshua 5 : 12. It ceased when the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, shortly after the death of Moses. The words were penned by him in the spirit of prophecy, or were added by a later inspired writer, like Deut. ch. 34.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. How often in Christian experience, the Wilderness of Sin lies just beyond Elim, a period of hunger and murmuring succeeding a period of delightful spiritual repose and refreshment. If you are now in the wilderness do not be disheartened; such trials are the common lot of God's children, and are good for your education in patience and faith, ver. 1.

2. Trials should lead to humble heart-searching, to faith, and to prayer; but how often they lead to murmurings and repinings, ver. 2.

3. The miserable condition of a backslider, who longs for the delights of sin, ver. 3.

4. A backslider is apt to murmur against his spiritual leaders, vers. 2, 3. A backsliding church is apt to quarrel with its officers.

5. How patient is God in rebuking our murmurings and supplying our wants; before he breaks forth against us in judgment he tries to redeem us by warnings and kindnesses, vers. 6-13, 20, 28, 29.

6. The manna may be regarded as a type of our temporal sustenance. It teaches us, then, 1. The folly of hoarding up for our own pleasure that which must so surely perish, ver. 19. 2. The inability of hoarded treasures to afford us real happiness, ver. 20; and 3. The duty of contentment with the blessings of to-day, without anxiety for the morrow, ver. 21.

7. All our blessings came from God, as truly as did the manna, ver. 15. Thank him for your mercies and rely upon his kindness to supply all your wants.

8. It is wrong to despair when you are in poverty and distress, God's eye marks your suffering, and his hand will relieve you, in answer to prayer, vers. 4, 12.

9. Man does not live on bread alone; if that is denied you God will provide something else, vers. 31-35; comp. Deut. 8 : 3.

10. The manna was a type of Christ and of all the spiritual blessings which we have through him, John 6 : 30-33. 1. As the Israelites ate the manna, so must our souls feed on Christ by faith, that his strength may enter into us and give us life. This same truth is set forth in the bread of the Lord's Supper. 2. The manna has been sent from heaven; but we must lay hold of it and gather it or it will not minister to our happiness. 3. We do not receive strength to-day for the duties of to-morrow; but each day brings its own strength, ver. 21. If it is our duty to pray in public, to confess our faults, to speak to souls of eternal things, we may be sure that strength will be given us when we attempt the duty. 4. We cannot live to-day on the experience of yesterday, on the memory of our conversion, or on the hoarded recollections of any delightful period. Those who have no present spiritual sustenance should gather it immediately. Happily, while the manna of yesterday is worthless, we may gather it afresh each morning. 5. The superiority of Christ to the manna which pointed to him, is taught in John 6 : 48-50. So all the gifts of this world confer at best only a temporary life; Jesus confers eternal life.

11. It is right to preserve such relics as may serve to remind us of God's mercies in the past, ver. 32. But we should beware of paying undue reverence to such objects, 2 K. 18 : 4.

12. God will supply, through all their lives, the wants of those who rely upon him, and will bring them at last to the eternal abundance of heaven, ver. 35; Josh. 5 : 12.

LESSON XII.—DEFEAT OF AMALEK. CHAP. 17: 8-16.

REPHIDIM.

Two places contend for the honor of identification with Rephidim, where the battle of this lesson was fought. One is the Wady Feirân, a beautiful and fertile valley immediately north of Jebel Serbâl. It was undoubtedly occupied by a considerable population at the time of the Exodus; and it is said that this population would naturally oppose the passage of the Israelites. It has in its favor also the monkish tradition. But insuperable difficulties attend this identification. 1. It is made by those who hold that Jebel Serbâl was the mountain of the Law; and since this view is now generally abandoned, the abandonment of Wady Feirân as the Rephidim of the text should logically follow. 2. If, as is now generally admitted, Jebel Mousa is the Sinai of the Exodus, the Wady Feirân probably cannot be Rephidim; for the two are twelve hours apart; and Rephidim seems to have been distant from Sinai but one day's journey, Ex. 19 : 2; Num. 33 : 15. 3. The Wady Feirân is exceptionally well-watered and fertile; but there was no water in Rephidim.

Robinson places Rephidim in Wady es Sheikh, which runs northeast to southwest, issuing in the Wady Feirân. In one part of its course it traverses a narrow defile, called the pass of El Watiyeh. A little distance to the south from this pass, it joins the Wady ed Deir, which leads into the plain of Er Râhah, before Sinai. The pass of El Watiyeh is about three hundred yards long; it is shut in by perpendicular cliffs of blackened granite on either side; and it is but from forty to sixty yards wide.

HOLLAND: "It appears to me that the Amalekites, having heard of the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and of the death of Pharaoh and his host, would be anxious to avoid, if possible, a collision with these invaders of their country, and would therefore act on the defensive, rather than go forth to attack them. This being the case, they would probably intrench themselves behind some strong position, and await their approach. The mountain barrier which I have described presents a most suitable line of defence; and behind this, I believe that the Amalekites assembled; those who inhabited Jebel Serbâl, and other more northerly districts, retiring thither with their flocks. They may have hoped that Moses would not lead his people so far south; but if he did, they occupied the position which of all others could most easily be held against an over-

8 THEN came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

whelming force, for the battle would necessarily be confined almost entirely to the pass, and, if conquered, the eastern valleys would afford a safe way of retreat.

"The features of the ground at El Watiyeh agree well with the short account which is given us of the battle of Rephidim. There is a large plain, destitute of water, for the encampment of the Israelites; a conspicuous hill on the north side of the defile commanding the battle-ground, and presenting a bare cliff, such as we may suppose the rock to have been which Moses struck; and another large open tract of country on the south of the pass for the encampment of the Amalekites, with abundance of water within easy reach. Curiously enough, at this very spot, at the foot of the hill on which Moses sat, if this be Rephidim, the Arabs point out a rock which they call the 'seat of the prophet Moses.' I do not attach much importance to either Arab or monastic traditions, but it is singular to find such a tradition at this spot." Having conquered this pass, the Israelites had an open way to Sinai through the remainder of the Wady es Sheikh, then through the Wady ed Deir, and then through the great plain of Er Râhah.

8. **Then.** Soon after the events of vers. 1-7.

Amalek. Here used as the name of a powerful people, Num. 24 : 20, who inhabited the country to the south of Palestine, between Idumea and Egypt, and to the east of the Dead Sea and Mount Seir, Num. 13 : 29; 1 Sam. 15 : 7; 27 : 8; 1 Chron. 4 : 43. It is usually supposed that they were the descendants of Esau, through his grandson Amalek, Gen. 36 : 12. But it seems from Gen. 14 : 7, where their country is said to have been overrun by hostile forces long before the birth of Esau, that such was not the case. Amalek, the grandson of Esau, seems to have been an Edomite chieftain, and not the founder of a distinct nation, Gen. 36 : 1, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19. Rev. W. L. BEVAN: "Arabian historians represent the Amalekites as originally dwelling on the shores of the Persian Gulf, whence they were pressed westward by the growth of the Assyrian empire, and spread over a portion of Arabia at a period antecedent to its occupation by the descendants of Joktan. This account of their origin throws light on the traces of a permanent occupation of central Palestine in their passage westward, Judg. 5 : 14; 12 : 15; and it accounts for the silence of Scripture as to any relationship between the Amalekites on the one hand, and the Edomites or the Israelites on the other." The Amalekites, compelled by the character of their country, were a nomadic people, Judg. 6 : 5, though they had towns and agricultural settlements, 1 Sam. 15 : 5, many of whose remains have been recently discovered. It is probable that their chief ruler was known by the hereditary name of Agag, Num. 24 : 7; 1 Sam. 15 : 8, as the monarch of Egypt always bore the title of Pharaoh. Rev. W. L. BEVAN: "Two important routes led through the Amalekite district, namely, from Palestine to Egypt by the Isthmus of Suez, and to Southern Asia and Africa by the Ælanitic arm of the Red Sea. It has been conjectured that the expedition of the four kings, Gen. 14, had for its object the opening of the latter route, and it is in connection with the former that the Amalekites first came into contact with the Israelites, whose progress they attempted to stop." The decisive battle of the text checked their hostility for a season. It was renewed a little later with success, on the borders of Palestine, Num. 14 : 45; and burst forth at intervals for several generations, Judg. 3 : 13; 6 : 3; 1 Sam. 15. The expedition of Saul seems to have broken their power; and David completed their destruction, 1 Sam. 27 : 30; 2 Sam. 8 : 12. A remnant, indeed, escaped to Mount Seir, where they were easily conquered in the days of Hezekiah, 1 Chron. 4 : 42, 43. Haman was probably, as Josephus says, an Amalekite, and of the royal line, Est. 3 : 1. The prophecy of Num. 24 : 20 was signally fulfilled.

Fought. The details of the engagement follow. We must probably here insert Deut. 25 : 17, 18. The Amalekites made a flying attack upon the rear of the Israelites as they came forward thirsty to the smitten rock; but afterwards they acted on the defensive. Canon COOK: "The attack upon the Israelites was made under circumstances at a time and place fully explained by what is known of the Peninsula. It occurred about two months after the Exodus, towards the end of May, or early in June, when the Bedouins leave the lower plains in order to find pasture for their flocks on the cooler heights. The approach of the Israelites to Sinai would of course attract notice, and no cause of warfare is more common than a dispute for the right of pasturage. The Amalekites were at that time the most powerful race in the Peninsula, which from the earliest ages was peopled by fierce and warlike tribes, with whom the Pharaohs, from the third dynasty downward, were engaged in constant struggles. It may be conjectured that reports of the marvellous supply of water may have reached the natives and accelerated their movements. On this occasion Amalek took the position, recognized in the sacred history, as the chief of the heathens, Num. 24 : 20, the first among the heathens who attacked God's people, and as such marked out for punishment, 1 Sam. 15 : 2." We must, however, recognize the sinfulness of Amalek, the antagonism to holiness which made him first in the assaults of the world upon Israel, as the ground of the condemnation pronounced upon him. See the first note on ver. 16.

9. **Moses said.** Joshua was thus formally selected and commissioned by Moses himself as the leader of the army.

9 And Moses said to Joshua: Choose us out men, and go forth,
fight with Amalek. To-morrow I will take my stand on
the top of the hill, and the staff of God in my hand.
10 And Joshua did as Moses said to him, to fight with
Amalek: and Moses, Aaron and Hur, went up to the top
11 of the hill. And it came to pass according as Moses held

Joshua. This is the first instance in which Joshua is brought into view. His name was originally Hoshea, *help*, Deut. 32 : 44; Num. 13 : 8. The divine name of Jah was afterwards added to it, and it thus became Jehoshua, or Joshua, *Jehovah's help*, a name which appears in its Greek form as *Jesus*. The great Captain of the Israelites and the Captain of our salvation had the same name, *Jehovah's help*, or *Saviour*. As the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and the New in Greek, the names appear different. For the sake of clarity the *Jesus* of Acts 7 : 45 and Heb. 4 : 8, in the Common Version, should be *Joshua*. Joshua was, so far as we know, the first to bear the name afterward rendered sacred by its association with the person of our Lord; and as the leader of God's people into Canaan, the type of heaven, he must be regarded as an eminent type of Christ.

He was born a serf in Egypt, about the time when Moses fled to the wilderness. He became the confidential assistant of the great lawgiver, Ex. 14 : 13, who, observing his ability, appointed him to the military service of the text. He accompanied Moses to the Mount of the Law; he was one of the twelve spies, Num. 13 : 17, and one of the two who gave a correct report, Num. 14 : 6. Near the close of the life of Moses, he was solemnly and publicly invested with authority over the people, Num. 27 : 18; and he afterwards received a special charge from God through the mouth of the dying lawgiver, Deut. 31 : 14, 23. In his eighty-fifth year, he assumed command of the people, and began a career of conquest which for both the difficulties and splendid successes which attended it, stands almost without a parallel. He died at the age of one hundred and ten years, after a life of stainless piety and brilliant achievements.

Choose us out men. The position of the foe was strong; the battle was evidently to be obstinate; the Israelites were unaccustomed to war; and hence the soldiers must be carefully selected for skill and bravery.

Go forth. It is evident from this that the Amalekites were acting defensively, as would naturally be the case with an army holding the almost impregnable pass of El Watiyeh.

Fight. The question whence the Israelites procured arms for the battle is discussed under Ex. 13 : 18. The miracle at Rephidim, vers. 1–7, had probably so convinced the Israelites of God's power and mercy that they were better prepared to enter into battle at the command of Moses than they had ever previously been. The great leader, therefore, relied upon their bravery.

To-morrow. The preparations for the assault were made the day before it occurred.

Stand. Station. The original does not exclude the idea of sitting, ver. 12.

On....the hill. In the sight of the army. For the position of this hill see the preceding essay on Rephidim.

The staff of God. So called because God had used it in the performance of many miracles. Held in the hand of Moses, it would encourage the warriors who had learned to regard its presence as the signal of divine favor. It would also teach those who beheld it to depend upon Jehovah for victory.

10. **To fight with Amalek.** The words seem to imply that Joshua advanced to the attack.

Aaron. See on Ex. 4 : 27.

Hur. A distinguished descendent of Judah, and the grandfather of the great artist Bezaleel, Ex. 31 : 2; 1 Chron. 2 : 9–20. The Jewish tradition, recognized by Josephus, makes him the husband of Miriam. If the tradition is correct, Moses was accompanied by his nearest relatives. Hur and Aaron are similarly associated in Ex. 24 : 14.

11. **Held up his hand.** There are two views in reference to this action. It is supposed by Kurtz that Moses merely held up the rod for the encouragement of the warriors, and that when they could no longer see it held aloft as the signal of the divine power, they grew timorous and suffered Amalek to prevail. The second view, which is generally received, makes the uplifted hands of Moses the expression of the prayer in which he was engaged; and thus the effect of their elevation and their return to an ordinary position teach us the efficacy of prayer. The first view is favored by vers. 9 and 11; but it does not enable us to account for the statement of ver. 12, that both hands were raised and stayed up, for only one would be required to hold the rod. We must so far receive the theory of Kurtz as to admit that Moses at first held the rod aloft to cheer the army; but the later uplifting of his

up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and according as he let
12 his hand rest, that Amalek prevailed. And the hands of
Moses were heavy; and they took a stone and placed it
under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur stayed
up his hands, one on this side and one on that; and his
13 hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And
Joshua weakened Amalek and his people with the edge
of the sword.

14 And Jehovah said to Moses: Write this as a memorial
in the book, and put in the ears of Joshua, that I will
utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

V. 14. *Or*, for I will utterly.

hands represented the prayer in which his anxious heart engaged. The uplifting of the hands was a common gesture in prayer, Lev. 9:22; Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 1 Tim. 2:8. *To lift up the hands* became, in fact, an expression synonymous with *to pray*, 1 Tim. 2:8. MURPHY: "The continual holding up of the hands denotes perseverance in prayer. Aaron and Hur joining in the upholding of Moses' hands present a striking emblem of common prayer."

Israel prevailed. The children of God still prevail by united action and prayer; hence they must exert their strength in the battle, and also seek God's strength.

As he let his hand rest Amalek prevailed. When the child of God ceases to pray his foes prevail. Only while he prays does he conquer.

12. **Until the going down of the sun.** The length of this first great battle of the Israelites, which seems to have begun in the morning, ver. 9, indicates the strength and determination of the Amalekites. Perhaps also it indicates the strength of their position in the narrow pass of El Watiyeh. The foe was no wild horde of disorderly Arabs, but a vast army of a mighty people, who were accustomed to warfare even against Egypt, and who were specially prepared by their intimate acquaintance with their desert home to take every advantage which it afforded.

13. **Joshua weakened Amalek.** The prayers of Moses and the exertions of the army were the joint means by which the victory was achieved. The strength of the enemy rendered the result notable.

His people. It is probable that by *Amalek* is meant the army and by *his people* the unwarlike portion of the nation, the ruins of whose cities and plantations, recently discovered, prove that they lived in the district. It was customary in ancient warfare to destroy not merely the army of the vanquished, but the population which it endeavored to defend; and it was enjoined upon the Israelites as a sacred duty to exterminate many of the guilty peoples with whom they came in contact.

With the edge of the sword. Canon COOK: "This expression always denotes a great slaughter of the enemy." So far were the Amalekites weakened by their defeat that in their next effort they acted in alliance with the Canaanites, Num. 14:45.

We are left to imagine the heroic adventures of the day and the strategy of the conflict; the purpose of the author was to record the mere event.

14. **Write.** The first instance in which this word occurs in the Bible.

This. The account of the battle and the prophecy of Amalek's fate, ver. 16.

A memorial. Something adapted to assist the memory and stir the heart with profitable recollections. The study of the past with reference to the exhibition of the divine hand in history is commended by God.

In the book. Not "in a book," as the Common Version; the definite article points to the historical book which Moses was preparing at the time. Thus the Mosaic authorship of the book of Exodus is certified, as are also the divine authority and guidance exercised in its composition.

Blot out the memory. Canon COOK: "The work was not actually completed until the reign of Hezekiah, when five hundred of the tribe of Simeon 'smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped,' and retained possession of Mount Seir, 1 Chron. 4:43. True prophecy deals often with the remote future, regardless of delays in its fulfilment; but certainly no one writing at a later time, while the Amalekites still existed as a nation, would have invented the prediction."

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Je-
16 hovah-Nissi. And he said: Because a hand was upon the altar of Jah, Jehovah shall have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

V. 16. *Or*, upon the banner of Jah.

15. **Built.** In biblical language one is said to do that which he procures to be done. The altar was of course erected with great solemnities and in the presence of the people who were thus taught to be thankful for their signal victory. We do not know where the ceremonies took place; but perhaps on the hill-top from which Moses had witnessed the battle.

An altar. Before the building of the sanctuary the erection of altars to Jehovah was a frequent act of piety, Gen. 8 : 20; 12 : 7; 22 : 9; 35 : 1; but after the establishment of the priesthood no altars outside the Tabernacle and the Temple were legal, Lev. 17 : 8, 9; Deut. 12 : 13. The altar of the text seems not to have been intended for sacrifice; it was probably a memorial like that of Josh. 22 : 10–29. It was also, like others of its class, a confession of unworthiness, and an expression of hope in the divine mercy. In this spirit Moses erected the memorial of a signal blessing which the people had not deserved.

The name. The naming of altars was not uncommon, Judg. 6 : 24; Gen. 22 : 14; Jer. 33 : 16; Ezek. 48 : 35.

Jehovah-nissi. That is, *Jehovah my banner*. The Hebrew words are retained, however, as they constitute a proper name. The meaning is that the name of Jehovah is the banner under which victory is assured. It was customary to place inscriptions on the royal banners, and each Pharaoh adopted at his accession some motto for this purpose. Moses chooses the single word *Jehovah* as that under which he will triumph. We are, of course, not to understand that the word was actually inscribed on the banner of Israel; it was written upon the heart as if upon the banner.

16. **Because a hand was upon the altar of Jah.** The rendering of the Common Version, *Because the Lord hath sworn*, is abandoned by all critics. If we are to read, as in the text, *the altar*, we must understand the altar to be the symbol of the religion of Jehovah upon which Amalek had sought to lay the destroying hand. If we are to read, as in the margin, *the banner*, we must understand the banner to be the symbol of the armies of Jehovah, which Amalek sought to defeat. In either case the words recognize the hostility of Amalek to the cause of holiness and truth represented by the chosen people. We thus learn that the enmity of Amalek was occasioned by his hatred of religion, and not by a mere dispute about the right of pasturage, though the latter was probably the pretext for the war, and must not be wholly ignored.

Jehovah shall have war with Amalek from generation to generation. This is not said in that spirit of blind revenge which punishes the child for the fault of the parent. But since the future generations of Amalek were foreknown as inheritors of the corruption which distinguished their fathers and led to the assault upon Israel, they are justly included in the prophetic curse. The children of notoriously wicked people are usually imitators of their parents. This war continued till the reign of Hezekiah; see 1 Chron. 4 : 41–43.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. The child of God may dread warfare, as did Israel at the Exodus; but he must nevertheless learn to be a good soldier; for the enemy of souls will assail him in the way, ver. 8.

2. For services of special difficulty God selects men of special qualifications, ver. 9. The conflict is theirs, but so is also the victory and the glory. We should strive so to prepare ourselves that God may employ us for his praise.

3. We should never enter heedlessly into conflict with Satan or wicked men, depending on God's aid in escaping the results of our own neglect. The battles of God demand preparation, ver. 9. This may be applied specially to young men who desire to be ministers; they should secure the highest preparation possible before entering upon the sacred office.

4. Those whose duty it is to remain in inaction when great battles for God are being fought may accomplish as much by their prayers as others by their toils, vers. 10–13.

5. Christian prayer and Christian work should always be united, vers. 10–13.

6. When Christians cease to pray, all their works are in vain, ver. 11.

7. By prayer and toil the child of God may always prevail, ver. 11.

8. Without the blessing of God the most heroic efforts are in vain, ver. 11.

9. God demands perseverance in prayer, ver. 12.

REVIEW. LESSON XIII.—SONG OF MOSES AND ISRAEL. CHAP. 15: 1–11.

1 THEN sang Moses and the sons of Israel this song, to Jehovah, and said:

10. God is specially pleased with united prayer, ver. 12.

11. The enemies of God, though they may achieve temporary successes, ver. 11, shall meet with terrible defeat at last, ver. 13.

12. The children of God, whatever may be their temporary reverses, ver. 11, shall ultimately prevail, ver. 13.

13. The study of history, in order to discover in it the hand of God, is highly profitable, ver. 14. But those who exclude God from history exclude its chief actor.

14. National sins are met with national judgments, ver. 14.

15. The children usually partake the character, and hence the fortunes, of their parents, ver. 18.

16. The enemies of God shall have no peace, ver. 18. He will continue to fight against them till they are utterly discomfited, ver. 14.

17. All prophecy must sooner or later be perfectly fulfilled, ver. 14.

18. We should ever remember with special thankfulness, the more signal mercies of our lives, ver. 15. We may build memorial altars in our hearts.

19. Is the name of Jehovah inscribed upon your banner? That is, are you fighting sin and Satan under his guidance and for his glory? If so, you are assured of triumph, ver. 15.

20. The officers and leaders of God's people need special help and sympathy, ver. 12.

21. The Scriptures come to us with divine authority, ver. 14.

The Committee appointed to select the lessons of the International Series suggest that these verses from the Song of Moses and Israel be employed as the basis of the review of the preceding quarter. Perhaps the majority of teachers will decide that the great deliverance which they celebrate has been sufficiently discussed in Lesson IX.; others, however, may desire to recur to the topic; and for such they are presented here with full annotations.

Canon COOK: "With the deliverance of Israel is associated the development of the national poetry, which finds its first and perfect expression in this magnificent hymn. It is said to have been sung by Moses and the people, an expression which evidently points to him as the author. That it was written at the time is an assertion expressly made in the text, and it is supported by the strongest internal evidence. The style is admitted, even by critics who question its genuineness, to be archaic, both in the language, which is equally remarkable for grandeur and severe simplicity, and in general structure, which, though rhythmical and systematic, differs materially from later compositions, in which the divisions are more numerous and the arrangement more elaborate. The subject matter and the leading thoughts are such as belong to the time and the occasion; unlike the imitations in the later Psalms, the song abounds in allusions to incidents passing under the eye of the composer: it has every mark of freshness and originality. The only objections are founded on the prophetic portions, vers. 15–17; but if ever there was a crisis calculated to elicit the true spirit of prophecy, it was that of the Exodus; if ever a man fitted to express that spirit, it was Moses. Even objectors admit that the invasion of Palestine was contemplated by Moses; if so, what more natural than that after the great catastrophe, which they accept as an historical fact, he should anticipate the terror of the nations through whose territories the Israelites would pass, and whose destruction was an inevitable condition of their success. In every age this song gave the tone to the poetry of Israel, especially at great critical epochs of deliverance. In the book of Revelations, 15: 3, it is associated with the final triumph of the Church, when the saints, 'having the harps of God,' will sing 'the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.'" The high literary finish of this hymn is a proof that Moses had received a liberal education in Egypt, where a principal branch of study was the art of composition in prose and verse. On a very ancient papyrus we have an Egyptian hymn to the Nile; it is longer than the song of Moses, and it is less imaginative; but it exhibits decided literary culture and taste; and it is invaluable as a relic of the school in which Moses was fitted to be the father of Hebrew poetry.

The song is naturally divided into three parts; vers. 1–5, 6–10, 11–18. Each succeeding part is longer and fuller of varied imagery than that which precedes it, and each begins with an ascription of praise to God. The first presents a brief statement of the deliverance, the second a more elaborate account of its details, and the third a prophetic view of its assumed results. The lesson embraces the first two parts and the first verse of the third.

I will sing to Jehovah, for he is highly exalted;
The horse and his rider has he cast into the sea.
2 My strength and my song is Jah,
And he has been my salvation:
He is my God, and I will honor him,

1. **Then.** After the deliverance, and before the departure from the Red Sea, ver. 22. The song may have been sung the day after the event which it celebrated: some time would be consumed in the march to the Fountains of Moses; and the composition of the hymn, whose literary finish shows that it was the production of careful study, Eccl. 12 : 9; Luke 1 : 3, Revised New Testament, and the preparations necessary for the elaborate and general celebration of the victory, must have increased the delay.

Moses. He was probably the leader; his Egyptian education having included the study of music.

And the sons of Israel. It is inferred from ver. 20, that the men formed one company, and the women another; the former chanting the song, the latter the brief response of ver. 21. Canon COOK: "The part here assigned to Miriam and the women of Israel is in accordance both with Egyptian and Hebrew customs. The men are represented as singing the hymn in chorus, under the guidance of Moses; at each interval Miriam and the women sang the refrain, marking the time with the timbrel, and with the measured rhythmical movements always associated with solemn festivities. Compare Judg. 11 : 34; 1 Sam. 18 : 6, and 2 Sam. 6 : 5. A representation of women dancing, some with boughs in their hands, others playing on timbrels, or tambourines of various shapes, some square and some round, is given by Wilkinson. The word used in ver. 20 for the timbrel is Egyptian, and judging from its etymology and the figures which are joined with it in the inscriptions, it was probably the round instrument." The round timbrel was nearly like our tambourine; it was edged with pieces of brass to make a jingling noise; it was covered with parchment like a drum; and it was beaten with the fingers. The dances of ver. 20 may still be seen in the East, where, in the words of BROWN, "the dance, a slow, grave, and solemn gesture, generally accompanied with singing and the sound of the timbrel, is led by the principal female of the company, the rest imitating her movements, and repeating the words of the song as they drop from her lips." The biblical dance was not a light amusement, but an expression of religious joy; and the sexes never mingled in it.

This song. The oldest Hebrew poem on record, and several hundred years older than the earliest remains of Greek verse.

To Jehovah. Now fully recognized as the leader and deliverer of his people.

I will sing. The service of God, even when rendered by a great company, is not a mere formality; each one should engage in it for himself as heartily as if he were alone.

To Jehovah. See the last note of the preceding verse.

He is highly exalted. The Common Version has, *he hath triumphed gloriously*, which, though it would have been appropriate to the occasion, is not the meaning of the original. By the miraculous deliverance of the people they had been fully convinced that Jehovah is exalted infinitely above all gods and kings, a truth which they had previously doubted, as they subsequently often questioned it, when they were led astray from his worship.

The horse and his rider. See on Ex. 14 : 23.

2. **My strength.** To deliver.

And song. Because of the strength which delivers.

Jah. *He who has been.* A variation of the name *Jehovah*, formed from the Hebrew verb *to be*. As *Jehovah* means *he who exists* and ever manifests himself in the deliverance of his people, so *Jah* means *he who has existed* to make the same beneficent manifestation. Hence *Jehovah* is used with reference to the general character of God, whether displayed in the past or to be displayed in the future; while *Jah* is employed almost exclusively when the writer surveys the past and contemplates its mercies; it points to Jehovah as the God of history, Ps. 68 : 4. It is appropriately used in the Song of Moses, which celebrates a completed manifestation of divine power and love.

He has been my salvation. From the vengeful power of Egypt. Hence he has gloriously earned the name *Jah;* see the preceding note.

He is my God. Each Israelite, thus solemnly chose *Jah*, the deliverer, as his only object of worship. The deliverance at the Red Sea had wrought appropriating faith.

I will honor him. In the song and the celebration of his glorious deeds, and in my whole future life. The Common Version has *I will prepare him an habitation.* Canon COOK: "Our Authorized Version is open to serious objection, as suggesting a thought (viz. of erecting a temple) which

My father's God, and I will extol him.
3 Jehovah is a man of war,
Jehovah is his name!
4 Pharaoh's chariots and his might he hurled into the sea;
And his chosen knights were sunk in the Red Sea.
5 Floods cover them;
They went down into the depths as a stone.
6 Thy right hand, Jehovah, glorious in power,
Thy right hand, Jehovah, dashes the enemy in pieces.
7 And in the greatness of thy majesty
Thou throwest down thine adversaries;
Thou sendest thy burning wrath; it consumes them as stubble.
8 And by the breath of thy nostrils the waters were heaped up;

could hardly have been in the mind of Moses at the time, and unsuited to the occasion. It is one of many instances of undue deference to Rabbinical authorities on the part of our translators."

My father's God. MURPHY: "The God of history and of covenant, who chose the head of the peculiar people to which I belong." The reference was doubtless also to the immediate progenitor of each singer; a profound reverence for the father is one of the most admirable traits of all Eastern people.

I will extol him. I will not only honor him for his mercy to me, but I will also extol him for his mercy to my fathers.

3. **A man of war.** A mighty warrior, able to overthrow the armies of Egypt, the most mighty in the world.

Jehovah is his name. This name, expressing not so much of mere power as of power exercised in mercy, had now become very dear to those who were but just learning its precious meaning and growing accustomed to its familiar use. See on Ex. 6 : 3.

4. **Hurled.** As from a sling. See on Ex. 14 : 27. Canon COOK: "All the words which describe the fall of the mailed warriors of Egypt are such as one who actually witnessed their overthrow would naturally employ."

Knights. The same word is used in Ex. 14 : 7, where it seems to refer to the officers of the army. They are here termed *chosen*, because they were selected for their positions owing to skill and courage in war. These mailed warriors are appropriately called *knights* in the revision; see the next note.

5. **As a stone.** Canon COOK: "The warriors on chariots are always represented on the monuments with heavy coats of mail; the corslets of 'chosen captains' consisted of plates of highly-tempered bronze, with sleeves reaching nearly to the elbow, covering the whole body and the thighs nearly to the knee; they must have sunk at once like a stone, or as we read in ver. 10, like lumps of lead."

6. **Thy right hand.** Jehovah is throughout the hymn represented as a warrior. The right hand was of course the one chiefly used in battle.

Glorious in power. Infinitely more mighty than the greatest of the chosen knights.

Dashes the enemy in pieces. Not killing one warrior after another, but at one blow scattering and annihilating whole armies.

7. **Thou sendest thy burning wrath.** In allusion, probably, to the terrible and fiery appearance noticed in Ex. 14 : 24; see the notes there.

It consumes them as stubble. Burned in the flame.

8. **The breath of thy nostrils.** The wind of Ex. 14 : 21.

The waters were heaped up. The natural and ordinary effect, often observed, of steady and vehement winds.

Flowing, they stood upright as a heap :
The floods were congealed in the heart of the sea.
9 Said the enemy : I will pursue, overtake,
Divide the spoil :
My soul shall be filled with them ;
I will draw my sword ;
My hand shall root them out.
10 Thou didst blow with thy breath, the sea covered them ;
They sank down as lead in the mighty waters.
11 Who is like thee among the Gods, Jehovah ?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders ?

Flowing. Not solid.

They stood upright as a heap. No one can observe without wonder the massing of waters driven into creeks and bays before continued storms. To those familiar with the ocean the language of the text will appear poetic and yet graphically true.

The floods were congealed in the heart of the sea. Canon COOK on the whole verse: "This description has been strangely misrepresented, as though it were irreconcilable with the preceding narrative. It differs from that as lyric poetry differs in its imagery from prose. On each side the Psalmist describes what he must actually have seen: on the north the waters rising high, overhanging the sands, but kept back by the strong wind ; on the south lying in massive rollers, kept down by the same agency in the heast or deep bed of the Red Sea. In both descriptions we have precisely the same effects ; in the former the bearings upon the passage of the Israelites are most prominent ; in this the scenery is presented in the form which impressed the seer's imagination most vividly, and which fixes itself most strongly on the spirit of the reader."

9. **Said the enemy.** Canon COOK : "The abrupt, gasping utterances; the haste, cupidity, and ferocity of the Egyptians, the confusion and disorder of their thoughts, are described in terms recognized by critics of all schools as belonging to the highest order of poetry ; it must not be forgotten that they enable us to realize the feelings which induced Pharaoh and his host to pursue the Israelites over the treacherous sandbanks."

Root them out. As an obnoxious weed is destroyed.

10. **Thou didst blow with thy breath.** Canon COOK : "The solemn majesty of these few words, in immediate contrast with the tumult and confusion of the preceding verse, needs scarcely be noticed." In the narrative of the preceding chapter, ver. 28, we are told only that "the waters returned ;" here we are made acquainted with the means which were employed to bring them back. There was a sudden change in the direction of the wind. This change may have concurred with the ordinary return of the tide ; the latter not being mentioned because it was a usual event. The Egyptians, who probably expected to complete the passage before the time for the returning tide, had been miraculously delayed, Ex. 14 : 20, 24, 25.

11. **Who is like thee among the gods?** Our conviction that idols are nothing and that Jehovah is the only God is so inwrought with all our thoughts, that we can scarcely realize the delight with which the Israelite made the discovery, accustomed, as he had been, to a bondage which seemed to prove the might of the Egyptian gods and the impotence of his own, and to the most gorgeous heathen temples of antiquity, and now delivered not only from Egyptian bondage, but from a partial indulgence in Egyptian idolatry.

Glorious in holiness. The glorious power of Jehovah having been celebrated, his holiness is brought to view ; the latter not less perfect than the former. The destruction of a godless and corrupt enemy was a proof of the justice and purity of the destroyer. MURPHY : "Holiness, or absolute purity of nature, is one of the attributes of God, in which he transcends all fallen man's imaginary gods. The gods of Greece, Rome, India, and all other heathens, partook of the moral infirmity of their votaries. On the contrary, holiness is the glory, the conspicuous excellence, of the divine essence." All the heathen gods were represented as lawless criminals ; and their worship encouraged the most fearful immoralities in their votaries.

Fearful in praises. In those deeds which call forth praise. The miracles of the Old Dispen sation were often such as were calculated to inspire awe, even in those who were delivered by their mighty agency.

Doing wonders. A glance at all the plagues, and a recognition of the hand of God in the terrible miracle which finally destroyed the power of Pharaoh.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. After the reception of signal mercies, we should pause to praise the Giver of all good. This is not only due to him, but necessary for our own joy and growth, ver. 1.

2. When favorable circumstances occur, we should be not only glad, but also thankful, ver. 1.

3. Those who make Jehovah their strength, shall experience such deliverances that they will be constrained in joy to make him also their song, ver. 2.

4. God has a war with all who reject his messages, ver. 3.

5. What sinner shall stand when Jehovah comes against him in battle, vers. 1–11.

6. The enemies of the Church are ever boasting that they are about to destroy it. Yet it lives, while they perish, vers. 9, 10.

7. The final destruction of the wicked will be sudden and awful, vers. 10, 11.

8. The perfect holiness of God renders it certain that he will destroy incorrigible sinners, and deliver his people, ver. 11.

9. A holy God is looking upon all your thoughts and deeds, and treasuring them up in his memory till the day of accounts, ver. 11.

10. It is our duty to be godlike, and hence holy, ver. 11; Lev. 11 : 44.

For other practical observations, the teacher is directed to the ninth lesson.

LESSON XIV.—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. CHAP. 20 : 1–17.

This title is not strictly Scriptural; see the following essay on the Decalogue as a whole; and that on the numbering of the Commandments; the first paragraph of each.

MOUNT SINAI.

The mountain on which the law was given is properly called Sinai, rather than Horeb. KEIL: "This mountain is constantly called Sinai so long as Israel stayed there, Ex. 19 : 18, 20, 23; 24 : 16; 34 : 2, 4, 29, 32; Lev. 7 : 38; 25 : 1; 26 : 46; 27 : 34; Num. 3 : 1; 28 : 6; Deut. 33 : 2; and the place of their encampment by the mountain is also called the 'desert of Sinai,' never the desert of Horeb, Lev. 7 : 34; Num. 1 : 1, 19; 3 : 14; 9 : 1; 10 : 12; 26 : 64; 33 : 15. But in Ex. 33 : 6 this spot is designated as 'Mount Horeb,' and in Deuteronomy, as a rule, it is spoken of briefly as 'Horeb,' Deut. 1 : 2, 6, 19; 4 : 10, 15; 5 : 2; 9 : 8; 18 : 16; 26 : 69. And while the general identity of Sinai and Horeb may be inferred from this, the fact that whenever the intention of the writer is to give a precise and geographical description of the place where the law was given, the name Sinai is employed, leads to the conclusion that the term Horeb was more general and comprehensive than that of Sinai, in other words that Horeb was the range, of which Sinai was one particular mountain, which only came prominently out to view when Israel had arrived at the mount of legislation. This distinction between the two names, which HENGSTENBERG was the first to point out and establish in his Dissertations, vol. 2, p. 325, is now generally admitted."

Of the mountains by which Israel was surrounded, and which were probably known by the general name of Horeb, applied to the whole district, Mr. E. H. PALMER says: "The granite mountains lie in such a rugged, tumbled chaos as scarcely to admit of classification. It has been usual to divide them into three clusters; that in the west having Mount Serbal for its highest point; the central, or Sinai group, of which one of the peaks of Mount Katharina is the highest in the peninsula; and the group to the southeast, culminating in the magnificent peak of Um Shomer. This division is useful, both because it enables us to retain a comprehensive idea of the leading features of the country, and because to these three the interest of the inquiry is chiefly confined. But there are several other peaks and groups which are scarcely less grand and imposing."

Where amidst this mountainous district of Horeb, is Sinai, the eminence of the text? We must turn from the western group of Serbal, and the southeastern group of Um Shomer, and seek for Sinai in the central group. Of the several separate mountains of which this group consists, tradition has fixed upon Jebel Mousa, the Mountain of Moses, a high block, isolated from the surrounding heights by intervening valleys, so that Moses could easily "set bounds about it," Ex. 19 : 23, and terminating in many barren peaks, which enclose a well-watered plateau or basin on the summit. The mountain is about two miles long from north to south, and about one mile wide. The neighborhood is better sup-

plied with water and grass than any other part of the peninsula. All authorities now concur with the tradition ; the features of the immediate neighborhood leave no doubt that the law was given here. But on what part of the mountain was it published? Tradition has fixed upon the southeastern peak, which is the highest of all; it is marked as sacred by a little chapel and the ruins of a mosque, and the name of Jebel Mousa is in a special sense applied to it, though also used for the whole mountain. RITTER, KURTZ, and many of the ablest critics of Germany follow LABORDE and F. A. STRAUSS, who sustain the tradition. In this country and England, however, it is generally accepted in only a modified form, and for the best reasons: 1. The tradition seems to have settled upon this peak as that beneath which the people stood to receive the Law, owing chiefly to its superior grandeur. 2. In 1838 ROBINSON affirmed, and the recent British ordnance survey of the peninsula has demonstrated, that there is no room beneath this peak for the assemblage of the Israelites. E. H. PALMER: "A single glance at the valley beneath is sufficient to show that it is not in any way adapted for the encampment of so large a host as that of the children of Israel." Rev. F. W. HOLLAND: "It is easily seen on the spot that the Wady Sebaiyeh could not have been the place where the Israelites were assembled to receive the law." 3. From the position of the people during the publication of the law, Sinai arose as a mountain that could be touched, Ex. 19 : 12; but the mountain at the southeastern extremity does not rise immediately from the valley. 4. In 1838, Robinson discovered at the opposite or northwest extremity of the mountain a broad plain which he at once identified with that on which the people must have stood during the promulgation of the law; and the most recent and careful authorities confirm his judgment. HOLLAND: "No place could be conceived more suitable than the plain of er Râhah for the assembling together of many thousands of people." E. H. PALMER: "A calculation made by Captain Palmer, from the actual measurements taken on the spot, proves that the space extending from the base of the mountain to the water-shed, or crest of the plain, is large enough to have accommodated the entire hosts of the Israelites, estimated at two million souls, with an allowance of about a square yard for each individual." HOLLAND: "The plain is upwards of two miles long and half a mile broad, and slopes gradually down from the water-shed on the north. About three hundred yards from the actual base of the mountain there runs across the plain a low, semicircular mound, which forms a kind of natural theatre, where possibly the priests and elders stood, Ex. 19 : 22; while farther distant on either side of the plain, the slopes of the enclosing mountains would afford seats to an almost unlimited number of spectators." There is also a continuation of the plain, a mile and a half long by three quarters of a mile broad, running to the southwest along the foot of the mountain, adding largely to the available camping ground. The end of the mountain which fronts upon this plain is called Rás Sufsáfeh, the Willow Peak, from a few willows which grow upon it. It rises so abruptly from the plain that one can literally stand under it, Deut. 4 : 11, and touch its base, Ex. 19 : 12. It rises nearly two thousand feet above the plain, and is visible from every part of the country which it faces. STANLEY conjectures that a low line of alluvial mounds which runs at its foot may answer to the "bounds" which Moses established to keep the people from pressing too near the awful scene. He compares the cliff to "a huge altar, rising in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain," "and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide." Owing to its direct contrast with the expanse at its foot, which is termed "enormous" by a recent explorer, the height, though not so lofty as that at the opposite extremity of the mountain, is more impressive, and as an outlook, it commands a more sublime scene. This grand cliff does not present an unbroken front; it is divided by a deep cleft, in whose bosom the Elders of Israel probably held their communion with Jehovah, Ex. 24 : 1, 2, 9–11, after which Moses was called to the highest peaks of the mountain, Ex. 24 : 1, 2, 12. While the law was proclaimed in the hearing of the people from the brow of the Rás Sufsáfeh, it is evident that Moses himself, at the beginning of the awful scene, Ex. 19 : 20, and during the forty days of his seclusion from them, was called to a higher and more secret spot, Ex. 24 : 18; and the more lofty peaks at the southeastern end, the Jebel Mousa in the stricter sense, may have been the place of these wondrous intimacies of God and man : and it is in this modified form that the tradition which connects the giving of the law with the southeastern extremity of the mountain is accepted by recent authorities. At the close of his fast Moses descended to the plain without being able to see the people below, Ex. 32 : 15–19; and it is remarkable that one of the most convenient paths from the Rás Sufsáfeh, commands no view of the plain, until the traveller has completed his descent, and that it leads directly to the foot of the hill on which tradition has located the golden calf. E. H. PALMER: "Often in descending, while the precipitous sides of the ravine hid the tents from my gaze, have I heard the sound of voices from below, and thought how Joshua had said unto Moses, 'there is a noise of war in the camp.' In Ex. 32 : 20 and Deut. 9 : 21, we are told that Moses strewed the powdered material of the idol on the 'waters' of the 'brook that came down out of the Mount;' and the most considerable stream of the immediate neighborhood, though it issues at the base of another mountain, skirts the western side of Jebel Mousa, and falls upon the plain before the Rás Sufsáfeh, in close connection with the cliff. It is certain from Ex. 19 : 17, that the people were not all encamped in the plain; they had probably occupied many of the adjacent glens, valleys and mountain sides, for convenience of water and

pasturage." It is also certain from Ex. 34 : 17, to use the words of KEIL, "that the glory of the Lord on the top of the mount could be seen from the camp; and from Ex. 34 : 1-3, that the camp, with the people and their cattle, were so immediately in the neighborhood of Sinai, that the people could easily have ascended the mountain, and the cattle could have grazed upon it." Now, from almost any position before Rás Sufsáfeh, the manifestation on the brow of the cliff could have been seen; while several paths behind it might lead the flocks up the mountain sides to graze. These many coincidences, none of which occur in reference to any other place, leave no doubt that Robinson has indeed pointed out the position of the Israelites during the promulgation of the law.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ATTENDED THE PUBLICATION OF THE LAW.

The Israelites, having left Rephidim after the defeat of Amalek, came to Sinai in the third month after their departure from Egypt, Ex. 19 : 1. It had been foretold that they should rest here and perform special acts of worship, Ex. 3 : 12. When the encampment was established, Moses ascended the mountain, on which the pillar of fire and cloud probably rested. God gave him a message to the Israelites setting forth the terms upon which they might enter into covenant with their divine deliverer, Ex. 19 : 3-6. This message the people, through their representatives, at once received with a hearty consent, Ex. 19 : 7, 8, and Moses returned to the heights above them to communicate their decision. Having thus announced the conditions and blessings of the proposed covenant, and gained the assent of the nation, God announced to Moses that he intended to publish it from a thick cloud, in order that the impressive manner of its communication might constitute forever the evidence of its authenticity, and serve also to accredit him who was the mediator. The third day was appointed for the solemn ceremony, Ex. 19 : 10, 11, and in the meantime the people observed certain ordinances of ceremonial purification, Ex. 19 : 14, 15, and erected a barrier around the whole mountain so that none might come near it, Ex. 19 : 12, 23. On the morning of the third day the mountain was covered with a dense cloud, the pillar having probably assumed a new form, and there were fearful thunders and lightnings, and tones as of fierce trumpet-blasts, Ex. 19 : 16. Travellers who have witnessed thunder-storms in the mountains of Sinai are still startled by the resemblance of the reverberations to the notes of the trumpet. Not only did the people tremble, Ex. 19 : 16, but the whole mountain quaked, Ex. 19 : 18. It is probable that there was also a deluge of rain from the over-hanging thunder-cloud, Jud. 5 : 4; Ps. 68 : 7, 8, 9; Hab. 3 : 3-11. Comp. Ps. 18 : 7-16; 29 : 3-9. Moses brought the trembling people forth to the barriers which had been erected for their preservation, and in the hearing of the hushed multitude he spake, and God answered him, calling him to ascend. He remained absent but a short time; the awe of the people seems to have departed; a movement of profane curiosity took place; and he was soon charged to return and impress again upon them, and especially upon the priests, the terrible danger of breaking through the barriers and approaching the wondrous scene. He stood with them when the Commandments were announced in thunder tones, Ex. 19 : 25; 20 : 19. During their publication the manifestations upon the mountain grew even more terrible than they had been previously, so that the multitudes were again affected with profound fear, Ex. 20 : 18, 19; Deut. 4 : 33; 5 : 4, 22, 23, 28. After reassuring them, Ex. 20 : 20, the law having been published in distinct words, Ex. 20 : 22, Moses, with Aaron, Ex. 19 : 24, passed up into the mountain and was covered by the cloud; here he remained for a brief period, receiving the most necessary laws and ordinances for the guidance of the nation, which, together with the Ten Commandments, constituted a distinct book, called the Book of the Covenant, Ex. 24 : 4, 7, which is preserved in Ex. 20-23.

THE ANGELS AND THE LAW.

We have seen that Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, passing between God and the people, and bearing the messages of both, Ex. 19 : 7, 9. But we are assured that there was also angelic mediation, Deut. 33 : 2; Ps. 68 : 17; Heb. 2 : 2; Acts 7 : 53; Gal. 3 : 19. But while it is thus certain that the angels were present and active, it is impossible to determine what they did. We know that Jehovah was manifest in person, that he spoke to the people directly, Ex. 20 : 22, and through the lips of Moses, Ex. 19 : 7, and that the angels also bore a mysterious part in the display; but beyond this all is conjecture; nor can we hope to ascertain more until we pass into the world of blessed spirits and converse with the angels themselves.

THE DECALOGUE AS A WHOLE.

The Hebrew name which is rendered in the Common Version *the Ten Commandments*, means literally *the Ten Words*. In Ex. 24 : 12, however, the Decalogue is called the *Law, even the Commandment*. It is elsewhere termed the *Words of the Covenant*, Ex. 34 : 28, *the Tables of the Covenant*, Deut. 9 : 9, 11, 15, *the Covenant*, Deut. 4 : 13; 1 K. 8 : 21; 2 Chron. 6 : 11; *the Two Tables*, Deut. 9 : 10, 17; and most frequently in the Old Testament, *the Testimony*. In the New Testament the Ten Commandments are called simply *the Commandments*, Matt. 19 : 17; Mark 10 : 19; Luke 18 : 20; Rom. 13 : 9. The name *Decalogue* does not occur in the Scriptures, though the name *the Ten Words* presents substantially the same meaning.

Rev. S. CLARKE: "The name most frequently used by Moses for the Decalogue signifies something strongly affirmed, literally *something spoken again and again;* it is therefore properly rendered in our version, *the Testimony.* Taking this in connection with the prohibitory form of the Commandments, the name must have been understood as the Testimony of Jehovah against the tendency to transgress in those to whom the document was addressed. When Moses laid up the completed Book of the Law, of which the Commandments were the central point, by the side of the Ark of the Covenant, his declared purpose was 'that it may be there for a witness against thee; for I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck,' Deut. 31: 26, 27." It was the solemn testimony of God's will concerning the duties of man. The same writer continues:

"It was by the Law, as it was represented in these Commandments, that there came 'the knowledge of sin,' Rom. 3: 20; 7: 7. The disturbance of the conscience which results from doing wrong, when there is no expressed law, is a vague discomfort to the person, with no clear apprehension as to the cause. But when the voice of the Lord has given forth the law in words intelligible to the mind, then comes *the knowledge* of sin as the transgression of righteous obligation to a gracious God.

"And this knowledge of sin necessarily involves a consciousness of condemnation. Hence the Tables given to Moses were 'a ministry of condemnation,' 'a ministry of death written and graven on stones,' 2 Cor. 3: 7, 9; see Eph. 2: 15. Yet was this ministry of condemnation a true revelation of Him who had redeemed his people in love; and it is, in the truest sense, a demand on them for the tribute of their love; see Rom. 7: 7–14. It is love in the creature which alone can obey the law in reality and with acceptance, Matt. 22: 37–40; Mark 12: 29–31; Luke 10: 26, 27; Rom. 13: 8, 10; Gal. 5: 4; James 2: 8.

"The relation in which the condemning strictness of the law stood to the forgiving mercy of Jehovah was distinctly shown in the symbolism of the sanctuary. When the Tables of the Law were deposited in the Ark of the Covenant, they were covered by the Mercy-seat, which, in accordance with its name, was the sign of the divine loving-kindness. The Cherubim which were on the Mercy-seat appear to have figured the highest condition of created intelligence in the act of humble adoration and service, and so to have expressed the condition on which were obtained forgiveness, deliverance from the letter that killeth, 2 Cor. 3: 6, and communion with Jehovah. This view of the significance of the Ark and what pertained to it seems aptly to suit the words in which the arrangement of the symbols is prescribed: 'And thou shalt put the Mercy-seat above upon the Ark; and in the Ark thou shalt put the Testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee; and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the Ark of the Testimony,' Ex. 25: 21, 22.

"The Ark, as the outward and visible sign of the covenant between Jehovah and his people, thus expressed, in a way suited to the time and the occasion, the divine purpose in the Atonement. The Law was the characteristic feature in the dispensation which was then present; and, accordingly, the essence of the Law was expressed, not in a symbol, but in plain words written by the finger of God. But the sentence of condemnation implied in the Commandments could not be exhibited in its marked severity as the basis of the Covenant. It was enclosed in the Ark, and over it the divine mercy was symbolized in such shadowy outline as was to edify the faithful believers until the fulness of the time came when the Son was sent 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation,' literally *a mercy-seat,* 'through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,' Rom. 3: 25, 26.

"The significance of the whole sanctuary may be said to be concentrated in the Tables of the Law and the Mercy-seat. The other holy things, with every external arrangement, were subordinated to them. And, hence, the place in which they were deposited was the Holy of Holies, closely shut off by the vail, entered by no one but the High Priest, and by him only once in the year, Ex. 40: 20, 21; Lev. 16: 2.

"It is to be observed that the Decalogue, in respect to the subject-matter, does not set forth what is local, or temporary, or peculiar to a single nation. Its two tables are a standing declaration of the true relation between morality and religion for all nations and ages. The Fourth Commandment is, in its principle, no exception to this. The Decalogue belonged to the Israelites, not because the truths expressed in it were exclusively theirs, but because it was revealed to them in a special manner. The breadth of meaning, which rightly belongs to it, may be compared to that of the Lord's Prayer, which, though it was especially given by Christ to his followers, for their own use, contains nothing unsuitable for any believer in one God."

HOW ARE THE COMMANDMENTS NUMBERED?

The Ten Commandments are not numerically divided in the Scriptures; we are not informed which is the first, the second, the third, the tenth. We are left to number them according to our own sense of propriety; and hence has arisen a fruitful controversy.

I. The division authorized by the Talmud, and adopted by the modern Jews, makes the first

division consist of the words: "I am Jehovah thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," Ex. 20 : 2 ; Deut. 5 : 6. The second embraces all the law concerning idolatry, Ex. 20 : 3-6 ; the third prohibits the vain use of the divine name ; and the tenth embraces the precept concerning covetousness, Ex. 20 : 17. According to this arrangement, the first division cannot properly be termed a commandment, it is, in fact, only an introduction to the Commandments, of which there are but nine. The advocates of the theory, therefore, lay stress upon the fact that the Scriptures never call the Decalogue the *ten commandments*, but where they are so translated having always in the original the *ten words*, Ex. 34 : 28 ; Deut. 4 : 13 ; 10 : 4.

II. The division sanctioned by the punctuation of our present Hebrew text, a punctuation gradually established by learned Jews during the period from the sixth to the tenth centuries of our era, makes but one commandment of the precepts concerning worship, Ex. 20 : 3-6. The second, according to this arrangement, prohibits the vain employment of the divine name. In order, therefore, to find ten precepts, that concerning coveting, Ex. 20 : 17, is severed into two : the first prohibits us from coveting our neighbor's house ; the second forbids us to covet his wife, his servant, etc. This mode of division is adopted by the Lutheran Communion, though a majority of the German scholars reject it ; and it is sanctioned by the Romish Catechism of Trent, though some Romish authorities adhere to another arrangement. The smaller Lutheran and Romish catechisms, where this division is adopted, give the Commandments in an abridged form, probably because the first is so long ; hence the prohibition of image-worship is not noticed. Among the former, who have the Bible, the omission is of little moment ; but among the latter, who are deprived of the Scriptures, and made to depend wholly on the instruction of the catechism and the priest, it is an important means of blinding them to the sin of idolatry. The objections to this scheme are insuperable. 1. It makes but one commandment of that which is naturally divided into two. In Ex. 20 : 3-6 we may distinguish, first, the prohibition of all heathenism, as the worship of the sun and moon and stars, ver. 3 ; and second, the prohibition of all image-worship, whether the image is regarded as the symbol of the true God, or whether it represents a false deity. 2. It divides into two that which is naturally one. In Ex. 20 : 17, the coveting of the house might be separated from the coveting of the wife, a much greater sin ; but how is it to be distinguished from the coveting of the ox ? Confronted with this difficulty, many have adopted that form of the prohibition given in Deut. 5 : 21, where the coveting of the wife is placed first in the order of enumeration, and the coveting of other things succeeds. But the fact that the order is different in the two passages shows that it is not important, as it would have been were the words intended to be severed into two precepts. Indeed, the difference of order would almost seem to be an arrangement of divine prescience to forbid forever the partition of the one commandment. 3. If we adopt the order of words in Deuteronomy as authoritative, we must, in consistency, suppose that the copy given there is of superior authority to that of Ex. 20. But almost all critics agree that the original form is presented in Exodus. It was written at the very time that the Law was published from Sinai, Ex. 24 : 4, 7 ; and on 17 : 14 ; but the book of Deuteronomy was composed near the close of its author's life, Deut. 1 : 1-5. It was quite customary among the Jews to quote freely from the Scriptures, expressing the sense rather than the exact words. To this custom our Lord and all the writers of the New Testament adhered ; and often they cast brilliant light upon the meaning of that which they quoted by giving a slight variation of the phraseology. And it is to this custom that Moses seems to have conformed in rehearsing the Decalogue to the Israelites on the eve of his departure from them. With those to whom the custom was familiar, it could occasion no confusion ; the variations would be understood at once ; and, hence, holy men adopted it without hesitation. But they quoted so as to interpret ; and an interpretation cannot with justice be elevated to an authority higher than that of the original utterance. The quotation of Ex. 20 : 17 in Deut. 5 : 21 therefore shows, by the different order of the words, that it constitutes but one commandment, and we are not at liberty to adopt the order of the quotation, which is an inspired commentary, as more authoritative than that of the original passage.

III. According to the division adopted by the Jews of our Lord's earthly life-time, and sanctioned by Josephus and Philo, the prohibition of heathenism in general constitutes the first commandment ; the second forbids the worship of images ; the third relates to the divine name ; while the tenth is aimed at covetousness in all its forms. This arrangement was sanctioned by the earliest authorities of the Christian world, such as Origen, Gregory Nazionzen, Jerome, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Irenæus. It is accepted by the Greek hierarchy. The different view of the Romanists caused it to be forgotten in the West till 1536, when Calvin revived it ; and it is now supported by all Protestant denominations except the Lutherans, and by nearly all the ablest critics of even this communion. It has in its favor the structure of the Decalogue itself, and the consent of the earliest Jewish and Christian scholars.

THE TWO TABLES.

How many of these Commandments were written on the first table, and how many on the second ? The most ready answer is that five were engraved on each, the first table containing our duties

1 AND God spoke all these words, saying:
2 I am Jehovah thy God, who have brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants.
3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

to superiors, and the second our duties to our equals. But the earlier Commandments are much longer than the later; and this arrangement supposes either that the first table was enormously larger than the second, or that the second was left almost blank. Moreover, the Commandments are more logically divided into those which define our duties to God, and those which define our duties to man; but if so, the division will not occur between the fifth and sixth. Many of the most distinguished critics adopt this latter classification. There is some difficulty, however, in its practical application. Was the law of the Sabbath engraved on the first table, among the prescriptions of duties to God, or on the second? In the Romish and Lutheran catechisms, made by those who hold that it is the third commandment, it is placed, of course, on the first. But many scholars who adopt this principle of classification, and who are not affected by their ecclesiastical relations, differ from one another in reference to the question. Some would place the two commandments concerning worship and that which refers to the use of God's name on the first table, and the remaining seven on the second. They are led to this arrangement in part by their regard for the symbolic numbers of Scripture, three referring to God, and seven to humanity in its relation to God. In justification of this view it may be observed that in the estimation of our Lord the law of the Sabbath is not merely a requirement of duty towards the Supreme being, but also a regulation designed primarily for the benefit of our race, Mark 2: 27, and that hence it may be assigned, without impropriety, to the second division of the Decalogue. If this was the arrangement of the Ten Commandments, the two portions occupied nearly equal spaces. Others, however, who hesitate to rank the Sabbatic law among the requirements of duty to man, place it on the first table, assigning four commandments to this and six to the second. The writer strongly favors that view which places the Sabbatic law at the head of the second table; yet it must be confessed that we cannot arrive at any definite decision, since the Scriptures give us no information on the subject, and since all the considerations adduced in favor of the various theories are inconclusive.

1. **God.** The Ten Commandments came immediately from God, Deut. 5: 4, 5, and hence their authority.

All these words. Not one of them was added by human agency.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

MURPHY: "The more closely we examine these two verses the more surely will we come to the conclusion of the Jewish Rabbis that the former is an essential part of the first commandment. It states a positive fact in the conviction and for the acknowledgment of the people, to which the latter verse merely adds the negative precept that gives strict precision and exclusiveness to the previous statement. The latter verse presupposes the former, and is incomplete without it. The consequent, 'thou shalt have no other gods,' needs the antecedent, 'thou hast me.'"

2. **Jehovah, thy God.** See on Ex. 6: 3. In prohibiting polytheism it was requisite that the people be reminded that they had a God, and needed not the "gods many and lords many" of the heathen.

Who have brought, etc. He is not only the true God, and the special possession of Israel, but the Redeemer who delivered the people from bondage.

Thee. The original is in the singular; for the commandment is addressed to each soul separately, Jehovah is not only God, the author and ruler of all things, but in a special sense the God of Israel, the people whom he had chosen, and hence of each individual Israelite.

The sanction of this first great commandment is threefold: 1. That its author is the supreme God, the Almighty; 2. That he is Jehovah, the special possession of his people; and 3. That he is their redeemer. These sanctions possess added force for us who have a clearer revelation of the deity, a larger proffer of inheritance in him, and a redemption from the bondage of sin and hell such as was but faintly prefigured by the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

3. **Thou shalt have no other gods.** The first commandment relates to polytheism. All antiquity was ready to admit the existence of Jehovah; the Israelites, even in their periods of greatest declension, claimed him as their God; but heathenism, both Gentile and Jewish, taught that there were other gods who were mighty, and who should be propitiated and served. While Jehovah was the god of Palestine and of the Israelites, each other land and people had its deity whose hostility should be deprecated and whose favor should be secured. It was against this doctrine of polytheism that the commandment was directed; Jehovah claims to be not only God, but the only God.

4 Thou shalt not make thee a carved image, or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or of what is in the earth
5 beneath, or of what is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity

Before me. Literally *before my face.* In addition to me. Rev. S. CLARK: "The polytheism which was the besetting sin of the Israelites in later times did not exclude Jehovah, but associated him with false deities."

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

This commandment is directed against image-worship of every sort. Polytheism and image-worship were quite distinct. Those who worshipped Jehovah alone, and rejected polytheism, sometimes worshipped him before an image, which they regarded as his symbol and abode. Such was the worship of the golden calf in the wilderness, Ex. 32: 5, and of the calves at Bethel and Dan, 1 K. 12: 26-33. On the other hand, polytheism sometimes existed without the worship of images, the sun and moon and stars and other objects of nature being considered deities or representatives of deity. It was necessary, hence, to prohibit by separate commandments both polytheism and image-worship, whether the polytheism was connected with image-worship or not, and whether the image represented the true God or the false deities of heathenism.

4. **Carved image.** All kinds of images are intended. They are called *carved*, because images of wood and stone were produced by sculpture, and molten images were finished by cutting and graving.

Any likeness. The prohibition of image-worship is here expanded so as to embrace all particulars, and render ignorance of the divine intention impossible. The details are given at greater length in Deut. 4: 16-19.

Heaven....earth....water. The prohibition extends not only to the whole material creation, but to the spiritual universe as well; for not only the heavens, but each remarkable spot of the earth and the streams and the oceans was supposed by many to be the abode of some deity. MURPHY, referring to WILKINSON as authority: "The Egyptians had images of celestial, terrestrial, and aquatic objects of worship." So had many other nations.

Under. MURPHY: "It is important to notice that 'under,' here means 'lower in level,' lest the Scriptures be accused of propounding the theory that the interior of our sphere is filled with water."

5. **Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them.** The images are referred to. The first commandment forbids the worship of any false deity, whether visible or invisible; this commandment prohibits the worship of any image, whether representing a false deity or Jehovah himself. It was not intended to condemn the use of images for purposes of decoration, a use divinely sanctioned in the structure of the Tabernacle. It was understood, however, by the later and more Pharisaical Jews to prohibit all sculpture and painting. Rev. S. CLARKE: "Considering the Cherubim of the Mercy-seat, and of the curtains of the Tabernacle, the pomegranates of the High Priest's robe, and the fruits and flowers of the Candlestick, to say nothing of the sculptures of the Temple in later times, 1 K. 6: 23, ff.; 7: 27, ff., any such notion as this must show the prejudiced and fragmentary way in which they were tempted to study the Scriptures. Josephus charges Solomon with a breach of the Law, on account of the oxen which supported the brazen sea, and the lions which adorned his throne; and in direct contradiction of Ex. 26: 31, he denies that the vail which concealed the Most Holy Place was ornamented with living creatures. This prejudice, from the time when the Pharisaic tendency began to work on the mind of the nation, must have effectually checked the progress of the imitative arts."

THE REASON FOR THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS.

For. This word introduces the reason.

A jealous God. Deut. 6: 15; Josh. 24: 19; Isai. 42: 8; 48: 11; Nahum 1: 2. Rev. S. CLARKE: "This reason applies to the first, as well as to the second commandment. The truth expressed in it was declared more fully to Moses when the name of Jehovah was proclaimed to him after he had interceded for Israel on account of the golden calf, Ex. 34: 6, 7."

Visiting the iniquity of fathers upon sons. Rev. S. CLARKE: "The visitation here spoken of can hardly be any other than that which we are accustomed to witness in the common experience of life; Ex. 34: 7; Jer. 32: 18. Sons and remote descendants inherit the consequences of their fathers' sins, in disease, poverty, captivity, with all the influences of bad example and evil communications. See Lev. 26: 39; Lam. 5: 7, ff. As regards the administration of justice by earthly tribunals, the law holds good: 'The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the

of fathers upon sons, upon the third and upon the fourth
6 generations, of them that hate me ; and showing mercy to

V. 5. *Or*, for them that hate me.

children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin,' Deut. 24 : 16. The same principle is carried out in spiritual matters by the Supreme Judge. The Israelites in a later age made a confusion in the use of their common proverb: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' There would have been truth in this saying had it been used only in reference to the mere natural consequences of their fathers' sins. In this sense their teeth were set on edge by the sour grapes their fathers had eaten. But the prophets pointed out the falsehood involved in the proverb as it was understood by the people. They showed that it was utterly false when applied to the spiritual relations in which each person stands in the judgment of Him who is no respecter of persons, Jer. 31 : 29, 30; Ezek. 18 : 2-4, ff."

While thus before human tribunals, as before the final bar of God, each man must be judged for his own sins alone, it is a law of nature that children shall usually suffer temporally in consequence of the transgressions of their parents. This law is doubtless based upon the fact that the children generally inherit the characters of their progenitors. MURPHY: "The history of the world shows that the ungodliness of the fathers is, as a rule of fallen nature, followed by the sons. Only grace interrupts the succession of sin." But there are painful exceptions; there are instances in which innocent and even pious children suffer disease and poverty and disgrace and death in consequence of ancestral crime. Rev. S. CLARKE: "But such suffering must always be free from the sting of conscience; it is not like the visitation for sin on the individual by whom the sin has been committed. The suffering, or loss of advantages, entailed on the unoffending son, is a condition under which he has to carry on the struggle of life, and, like all other inevitable conditions imposed upon men, it cannot tend to his ultimate disadvantage, if he struggles well and perseveres to the end. He may never attain in this world to a high standard of knowledge, or of outward conduct, compared with others; but the searcher of hearts will regard him with favor, not in proportion to his visible conduct, but to his unseen struggles." The law of nature does not except from its operation even the innocent children of guilty parents; else it would cease to be a law, and would become a miracle: and inasmuch as the reign of uniform laws is better for the development of our race than a reign of perpetual miracles, it is permitted to continue. Even innocent children involved in the punishment of others have the consolation of knowing that their struggles, if bravely made, will be the means of developing their higher and finer powers, that "all things work together for good to those who love God," that eternity will bring to those who persevere an infinite compensation for all suffering and a peerless reward for all endeavor.

Upon the third and upon the fourth generations. MURPHY: "This is a timely guard against a common error to which men have been prone in all ages, namely, that the opinions and customs of their forefathers, even though they be wrong, are an excuse or justification for the sons walking in the same errors of judgment and conduct. The fathers will have to account for their own iniquity not only as men, but as fathers setting a bad example to their household. But the sons who, on arriving at the exercise of a natural judgment, walk in the same iniquity, will be treated as responsible beings, and visited for the iniquity which they have made their own."

Of them that hate me. All who do not love God are included in these terms. Many impenitent persons deny that they hate God; but they admit that they hate the infinite holiness and justice which the Scriptures ascribe to him, as well as that love which can be exercised only on principles of justice, and which, therefore, requires both the sacrifice of Christ and the faithful struggle of the soul in order to our salvation. When the natural heart thinks that it is not at enmity with God, it probably contemplates only a few of the divine attributes, such as the omnipotence of the Creator, or a picture of its own fancy, quite diverse from the revealed original.

6. **Showing mercy.** *Mercy* means *favor to the guilty*. And since our race is all involved in guilt, every favor which we receive is also a mercy. The unregenerate heart delights in the doctrine of the divine kindness; but the doctrine of divine mercy, which teaches the guilt of the recipient, it resents.

To thousands. Rev. S. CLARKE: "Jehovah's visitations of chastisement extend to the third and fourth generations; his visitations of mercy to the thousandth, that is, forever." The mercy which God thus shows is the antithesis of the iniquity which he visits upon the children of godless parents; it therefore includes both the disposition of the heart and the fortunes of the life. The children of pious parents, as statistics abundantly prove, are more apt than others to become subjects of saving grace; and they inherit advantages for the successful prosecution of ordinary pursuits.

thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take up the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not clear him who takes up his name in vain.

V. 6. *Or*, to them that love me.
V. 7. *Or*, thy God for falsehood.
Ibid. *Or*, take up his name for falsehood.

Their piety, however, is not inherited, like the malevolent dispositions of those whose parents were wicked; it is the direct gift of God in answer to the prayers of the parents, and in accordance with the promise of the text. But as the rule that the children imitate the sins of godless parents has its happy exceptions, so also the rule that pious parents shall be blessed with pious children has its unhappy exceptions. The parent must pray and labor for the religious instruction of his child, if he would claim the promise; and the child cannot receive it without personal consecration. We have no right to assume that the child of pious parentage is also a child of grace; like others, it must be judged by its fruits.

Them that love me. The service of God is not one of constraint; it proceeds from love. Mere morality, without love to God, is inadequate to secure salvation. The direct connection between love to God and the first Table of the Law is affirmed by both Moses and Christ, Deut. 6 : 5; Matt. 22 : 37, 38. The phrase, *them that love me*, refers to both parents and children, showing that the children will probably be blessed, and also that they can be blessed only on condition that they possess the love for which the parents were distinguished.

And keep my commandments. The result of love to God. The words express the general tenor and effort of the life; and they do not require a perfect obedience of heart and life, as is proven by the use of the word *mercy* in the promise of which they express the condition; there can be no mercy for those who are perfectly holy.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

7. **Thou shalt not take up the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.** Rev. S. CLARKE: "The greater number of the critics of our day give it the sense, *Thou shalt not swear falsely by the name of Jehovah thy God.* The Hebrew word which answers to *in vain* may be rendered either way. The two abuses of the sacred name seem to be distinguished in Lev. 19 : 12. Our version is probably right in giving the rendering which is more inclusive. To swear falsely is undoubtedly a profanation of the name of God; and looking at the matter on its practical side, the man who, in a right spirit, avoids the idle use of the name, will be incapable of swearing falsely. Hence there may be a reference to this commandment, as well as to Lev. 19 : 12, in Matt. 5 : 33." The lightness with which at present all Orientals use the name of God may exhibit the custom of antiquity; and we should expect to find a vice so widespread and inveterate condemned in the Ten Commandments. At the same time, the admirable economy of this divine code is exhibited in the fact that the words include not only profane swearing, but perjury, blasphemy, and all other modes of dishonoring the Supreme Name.

THE REASON.

Jehovah will not clear. The fearful prospect of future retribution is held up to dissuade from disobedience. It is this which should ever be kept in mind by those who take judicial oaths. There is a fearful account for persons who indulge in the disgusting habit of profane swearing, a habit which induces one not only to speak but to think and feel lightly and irreverently of the deity, and which thus leads to a multitude of sins such as they commit who have divorced themselves from the fear of God and of his judgments.

THE THREE COMMANDMENTS OF THE FIRST TABLE.

These three commandments relate specially to God. The first relates to his unity; the second to his spirituality; the third to the reverence due him from those who know his name. In the first we are forbidden to make him who is the only One a mere god among gods; in the second to liken him who is a spirit to the corruptible works of his hands; and in the third to degrade our souls and cast off his fear by light or wicked invocations of his name.

8 Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy: six days
9 10 shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh
day is a sabbath to Jehovah thy God: thou shalt not do
any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy ser-
vant, nor thy handmaid, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger
11 that is within thy gates; for in six days Jehovah made the

V. 10. *Thou, nor thy son*, etc.; Heb., more exactly: thou and thy son and thy daughter, thy servant and thy hand-maid and thy cattle, and thy stranger, etc.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, vers. 8-10.

The transition from the first table to the second is natural: the fourth commandment enjoins a duty which we owe to both God and man; to God, since the Sabbath is devoted to his service; to man, since "the Sabbath was made for man;" it is therefore rightly placed at the head of the second table.

Rev. S. CLARKE: "The direct connection of the Commandments of the second table with the principle of love between man and man is affirmed Matt. 22: 39, 40; Rom. 13: 9, 10; Gal. 5: 14."

8. **Remember.** This word is evidence that the Sabbath had been long before instituted, Gen. 2: 2, 3, that it was observed by the patriarchs, Gen. 8: 10, 12; 29: 27, 28, and that the Israelites had in a measure forgotten it, Ex. 16: 22-30, perhaps owing to the fact that the Egyptians exacted their labor on that day as on others. The people would not have been commanded to remember an institution of which they could know nothing.

Sabbath. The original word means *rest after labor*. The Sabbath day is therefore literally *the rest day*.

To keep it holy. This points to something more than mere rest; the day should be set apart to special religious privileges and duties. The commandment was not intended, however, to repress the natural feelings of the heart and exercises of the mind, in so far as these are consistent with the general requirement of rest and worship. The soul is so constituted that it must each day consider a multiplicity of objects and be affected by a multiplicity of emotions; its attention cannot be fixed unremittingly upon even the most sacred things; and we are expected to ever interpret the Scriptures in the exercise of common sense. The Sabbath, even in the Old Dispensation, was designed to be "a delight," Isai. 58; 13, and not an irksome yoke. Its very holiness should make it cheerful; for religion is happiness. The remembrance of a creation completed and of a Saviour triumphant over the grave, and triumphant for us, should occasion only the most jubilant thoughts. Parents should endeavor to make this day one of sacred and decorous joy in their own use of it and in the estimation of their chidren.

9. **Six days shalt thou labor.** The obligation to labor in some honorable calling is as great as the obligation to rest on the Sabbath day.

10. **A Sabbath to Jehovah thy God.** For the double reason that he instituted it by his example and appointment, and that it was devoted to his special service.

Thou shalt not do any work. It was always intended that these words should be interpreted in the exercise of good sense, as permitting works of necessity and mercy. For the proof, see Mark 2: 27; Luke 13: 10-17. Even the over-scrupulous Pharisees interpreted them as permitting works of necessity, Luke 13: 15; it was only works of mercy that they condemned.

Thy son, etc. The rest was enjoined upon all; and each one was responsible for its observance by those under his control, and the public authorities for the obedience of foreigners.

Thy servant nor thy handmaid. Rev. S. CLARKE: "By this command witness was borne to the equal position which every Israelite might claim in the presence of Jehovah."

THE REASON.

11. **In six days.** We are not obliged to suppose that these days consisted of twenty-four hours each. The days of Gen. 1 began with the approach of darkness, and had their dawn and their period of light, closing with the twilight which ushered in their successors, Gen. 1: 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. A period thus limited by darkness and light could be best described by the word *day*; and a succession of such periods might very well constitute the basis of legislation concerning the division of our shorter days.

Jehovah made. The word here rendered *made* is distinguished from that which means *to create*; and its primary idea, according to GESENIUS, lies in *forming, shaping, cutting*. The creation,

heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: therefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

strictly speaking, is described in the first verse of Genesis. Shortly preceding the advent of man upon the earth, there was probably a period of destruction, Gen. 1 : 2; and this was followed by a *remaking*, so to speak, of the heavens and the earth, when, during the six periods mentioned in the text, both were fully prepared to minister to the sustenance and comfort of man. It is highly significant that the writer should avoid the word *created*, and describe the heavens and the earth as merely *made* during the time to which he refers.

Rev. S. CLARKE: "The works of creation are described as culminating in the creation of man. The Sabbath crowned the completed works, and as it was revealed to the Israelite, it reminded him of 'the fact of his relation to God, of his being made in the image of God; it was to teach him to regard the universe not chiefly as under the government of sun or moon, or as regulated by their courses; but as an order which the unseen God had created; which included sun, moon, stars, earth, and all the living creatures that inhabit them. The work, then, was especially to raise the Jew above the thought of time, to make him feel that though he was subject to *its* laws, he yet stood in direct connection with an *eternal* law, with a Being who is and was and is to come.' Philo aptly calls the Sabbath day *the imaging forth of the first beginning*. Some of the wisest Jewish teachers have said that he who breaks the Sabbath denies the Creation. But this great idea did not exclusively belong to the Israelite, although it was revealed to him, above all men, in its true relation to God and man. Real worship for every man, always and everywhere, is of course based on the truth of a Creator distinct from the creation. And thus the law of the Sabbath was the expression of a universal truth. Hence, the Commandment bears its meaning for all mankind."

Rested. Not that he was fatigued. The language is accommodated to our modes of thought. He ceased from the special labor in which he had been engaged; and the delight which he experienced in the contemplation of his works was analogous to our delight in that rest which is the reward of faithful toil, Gen. 1 : 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 2 : 2; Ex. 31 : 17.

The seventh day. It is rightly remarked that the seventh day of God's rest is nowhere said to have had a close. It is probably destined to continue until the termination of our present Dispensation, when a work similar to that described in the first chapter of Genesis shall engage the thought of God, and "a new heavens and a new earth" be prepared for his people.

Blessed. CONANT: "Distinguished it above other days by his special regard."

Hallowed. Made holy. CONANT: "Set it apart from common and worldly uses, and consecrated it as a season of sacred rest. His consecration of the day makes it sacred for all time; and his blessing has made it rich in temporal as well as spiritual benefits to the race of man."

A further reason for the observance of the Sabbath was the mercy of God in the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, Deut. 5 : 15. Possibly that deliverance took place upon the holy day; or perhaps it is mentioned merely as an incentive to obedience. It is not referred to in Exodus as a reason for the observance of the Sabbath; for it was a reason which appealed only to the Hebrew; and the Ten Commandments were designed for the whole race of man. This reason has its vivid analogy, however, in the basis of the Christian Sabbath, the resurrection of Christ and the perfect deliverance of our souls from the bondage of death.

OUR OBLIGATION TO OBEY THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

This is established by the following considerations: 1. All admit that the other Commandments of the Decalogue are binding upon us. And it is not probable that God would announce nine laws of perpetual obligation, and place in their very midst one designed to be temporary, and yet give us no information of the fact. Those who admit, as all do, that the other precepts are in their nature of perpetual force, being always and everywhere right, can scarcely expect us to suppose that in the very midst of these God has inserted a strictly ceremonial law, designed to be terminated with the Old Dispensation. "God is not the author of confusion." 2. The Sabbath was established at the dawn of human history for the race, Gen. 2 : 1–3. It was observed before this law was published, Ex. 16 : 22–30. It is, therefore, not a Jewish, but, in the broadest sense, a human institution. 3. Our Lord so regarded it, Mark 2 : 27: "The Sabbath was made for man." 4. All history proves that the Sabbath is a beneficent institution, conducive not only to the spiritual, but as well to the physical, mental, and moral welfare of our race. 5. Many persons are prejudiced against the Fourth Commandment, because they confuse it with the severe civil legislation of Moses, by which it was enforced. The Mosaic legislation in general was adapted to his time and his people for which it was made; it embodies many principles of the utmost value to modern legislators; but it is in no other sense

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long on the ground which Jehovah thy God gives thee.

binding upon us. We should ascertain how the Sabbath is to be observed not from the civil law of Moses, but from the Commandment before us; and especially from the interpretation of it furnished in the New Testament, for "the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," Mark 2 : 28; Luke 6 : 5.

THE SABBATH AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

How far should the civil government proceed in the enforcement of this Commandment? 1. It should protect all men from disturbance during their hours of worship, whether they assemble on the Sabbath or on any other day of the week. 2. It should study the sanitary interests of the people; and since it has been clearly proven that their health of body and mind and their length of life are promoted by a cessation of labor during one day in seven, it should enforce such a cessation. 3. While it should not interfere with the religious opinions and customs of any one, it should ever favor the cause of order and morality; and since all history demonstrates that the cessation of labor upon the Sabbath day, giving the toiling masses an opportunity to think of higher things than those of time, is conducive to the quiet and stability of society, such a cessation should be enforced. 4. But the leisure which is thus afforded may be employed in dissipation and crime. Schools of vice and crime should be suppressed not only on the Sabbath, but whenever they are discovered. Inasmuch, however, as the general leisure of the Sabbath day affords them a special opportunity of action, they should be closed on that day with special care. 5. The civil government has no right to compel men to attend church, or to engage in religious observances at home. Its office is confined to the protection of those who desire to enjoy the day in a religious manner, and to the maintenance of rest, order, and morality.

THE CHANGE FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

The argument may be compressed into few words. 1. The Israelites were accustomed to observe what we term Saturday as their Sabbath; but in the Commandment, where the phrase *the seventh day* occurs, it seems not to refer to the particular day now known as Saturday, but to the seventh part of time; hence it is distinguished from the *six days* when it is lawful to work. The term *the seventh day* was not necessarily a proper name, as is our word *Saturday*; its correlation with the term *six days* shows that it is a mere numerical expression. It undoubtedly fixed the mind of the reader upon a particular day; but this was owing to his previous custom, and not to the meaning of the words themselves. 2. The reason which is assigned for the observance of the seventh day does not compel us to the choice of any special day out of the seven; it is satisfied by the observance of one day in seven, in imitation of the Creative worker. 3. The reason is not abrogated by the change of the day; the rest of the Creator was a type of the rest from toil and anguish which Jesus enjoyed when he triumphed over death in his resurrection. We have now a double reason for our dedication of the Sabbath to rest and worship. 4. Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath, and possessed authority to change the day of its observance. That his New Testament recognizes the first day of the week as a day of rest and worship is evident from the following considerations: (1) Jesus appeared to his disciples on the day of his resurrection, which was the first day of the week, Matt. 18 : 1-15. (2) One week later, or according to the Jewish method of reckoning, after eight days, he appeared to them again, the disciples being assembled together, John 20 : 26-29. (3) In 1 Cor. 16 : 1-4, Paul seems to recognize the first day of the week as that on which the Corinthian Christians assembled for worship. (4) That Paul and the Gentile churches under his instruction, held their assemblies for worship and celebrated the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, is evident from Acts 20 : 4-7. (5) The day of Christ's resurrection came to be known as "the Lord's day," Rev. 1 : 10; and like "the Lord's cup," "the Lord's table," "the Lord's Supper," the name must point to a sacred observance. We may state in the words of CALVIN the conclusion to which these evidences lead: "We may, therefore, justly affirm that the Apostles, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, instead of that seventh day observed under the Law, did appoint that day which was first in the creation of the former world; yet not, therefore, because it was first in that work of creation, but because Christ by his resurrection on that day did bring forth that new and eternal light of another world; and, therefore, this day hath been named 'the Lord's day' ever since the time of the Apostles." While the Jewish and Gentile churches concurred in the observance of the Lord's day, the former observed also the Jewish Sabbath, Acts 21 : 20; but it was never observed by the latter. IGNATIUS, a disciple of the Apostle John, and pastor of the church at Antioch from about A.D. 70, says: "Let every one who loves Christ keep holy the Lord's day, the queen of days, the resurrection day, the day of all days." CLEMENT of Alexandria, A.D. 192, says: "A Christian, according to the command of the Gospel, observes the Lord's day, thereby glorifying the resurrection of the

13 Thou shalt not kill.
14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
15 Thou shalt not steal.

Lord." Thus the example of the Apostles was followed in the age immediately succeeding their era, as it has been followed ever since.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

This Commandment prescribes a duty which we owe to man; but inasmuch as our parents should stand next to God in our esteem, it is rightly placed after the Law of the Sabbath: our glance is still upward towards our superiors.

12. **Honor.** In the heart and in the life. The word expresses far more than *obey*, which refers chiefly to outward deeds. The duties of a child to its parents should all spring from a feeling of profound reverence and affection, such as leads not merely to cold and formal obedience, but to every possible manifestation of love and zeal. The right of the father to command and the obligation of the son to obey may cease when the latter has attained the station, and assumed for himself the cares and responsibilities of manhood; but his obligation to honor the earthly authors of his existence and guardians of his childhood must continue while he lives. Considered in every possible light, the word of the text is most happily chosen.

Thy father and thy mother. MURPHY: "The father and mother are distinctly specified, to indicate that they are equal in authority, and, therefore, equally entitled to that honor which the mother will attract by her love, and the father will enforce by his power."

The Fifth Commandment refers also to magistrates and ministers of religion; for the government of the Israelites when it was published was largely patriarchal, so that the father was both the ruler and the priest of his household.

THE PROMISE.

That thy days may be long on the ground. Rev. S. CLARKE: "Filial respect is the ground of national permanence. When the Jews were about to be cast out of their land, the rebuke of the prophet was, that they had not walked in the old paths, and had not respected the voice of their fathers as the sons of Jonadab had done, Jer. 6 : 16; 35 : 18, 19. And when in later times the land had been restored to them, and they were about to be cast out of it a second time, the great sin of which they were convicted was, that they had set aside this Fifth Commandment for the sake of their own traditions, Matt. 15 : 4–6; Mark 7 : 10, 11. Every other nation that has a history bears witness to the same truth. Rome owed her strength, as well as the permanence of her influence after she had politically perished, to the steady maintenance of the *patria potestas*. China has mainly owed her long duration to the simple way in which she has uniformly acknowledged the authority of fathers. The divine words were addressed emphatically to Israel; but they set forth a universal principle of national life. St. Paul calls this commandment 'the first commandment with promise,' Eph. 6 : 2; the promise is fulfilled in God's government of the whole world. The narrow view which Selden and others have taken of the commandment, that it implied no more than a prediction that the children of Israel should possess the land of Canaan on the condition stated, is alien to the spirit of the Decalogue."

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Here begin those Commandments which relate to our equals; and they embrace the remainder of the Decalogue.

13. **Thou shalt not kill.** The best commentary upon this precept is found in the words of our Saviour, Matt. 5 : 21–25. Rev. S. CLARKE: "The Scribes and Pharisees failed perfectly to set forth the Law, in their teaching as well as in their practice; they taught the mere words in their dry external relations; 'they gave the husk without the kernel.' Their righteousness, both that which they taught and that which they practised, therefore, fell short of the true standard, Matt. 5 : 20." Jesus gave the Law its true spiritual interpretation, showing that God regards not merely the external deed but the hidden motive, and that there may be germinal sin, such as does not come forth into action, but which, nevertheless, really exists. The more spiritual among the Israelites had doubtless always understood, with more or less distinctness, that the Commandments are thus to be interpreted with reference to the state of the heart. It is therefore a violation of this commandment to cherish those malevolent dispositions which in their active expression become violence and murder. The same view is inculcated in 1 John 3 : 15. The teacher should distinguish, however, between *cherishing* a wrong feeling, while repressing its outward expression through motives of expediency, and the mere *existence* of the feeling in the soul, while the better nature protests and struggles against it, and out of lofty religious motives, enchains it from manifestation in criminal deeds. The first is a state of condemnation; the second may be a condition of heroic virtue; see Rom. 7; 1 Cor. 9 : 27.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
17 Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife, nor his servant, nor his

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

14. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** For the divine commentary of Jesus see Matt. 5 : 27–32. See also the remarks on the preceding Commandment; the principle which they state applies also to this.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

15. **Thou shalt not steal.** This Commandment protects us in the enjoyment of our property, and forbids us to take that which does not belong to us, whether secretly or by open violence, whether by force or fraud, or by the chances of the gamester. The deeper meaning of the precept, and the criminal motive which it condemns, are discovered in the tenth Commandment; our Saviour did not need, therefore, to give it a spiritual interpretation in his Sermon on the Mount.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

16. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.** The hidden motive of slander is also specified in the tenth Commandment; see the last sentence of the preceding note. Rev. S. CLARK: "No human eye can see the coveting heart; it is witnessed only by him who possesses it and by Him to whom all things are naked and open. But it is the root of all sins against our neighbor in word or in deed, James 1 : 14, 15. The man who is acceptable before God, walking uprightly, not backbiting with his tongue, nor doing evil to his neighbor, is he who 'speaketh the truth IN HIS HEART,' Ps. 15 : 2, 3."

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

17. **Thou shalt not desire, etc.** MURPHY: "The improper desire is the root of all evil. It can seldom be reached by human legislation. But it is open to the Searcher of hearts. The intent is that which, in the last resort, determines the moral character of the act. This last 'word' is, therefore, the interpreting clause of the whole Decalogue," Rom. 7 : 7. It fully warrants the spiritual interpretation of Jesus which we have already noticed, and proves this to be not something added by the Divine Man, but the true and original intention of the Ten Commandments; see Rom. 7 : 14. Read the remarks on this Commandment under the three preceding Commandments. Rev. S. CLARK: "St. Paul speaks of the operation of this Commandment on his own heart as the means of revealing to him the holiness of the Law, Rom. 7 : 7."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Each Commandment will suggest many lessons to the teacher; and only such practical observations are appended as would not be apt to occur to the ordinary reader.

1. The Ten Commandments are the very words of God, and therefore demand our most serious study and our constant obedience, ver. 1.

2. The benefits which we have received from God, and especially the deliverance from sin and hell which he has provided by the gift of his Son, plead with us to keep his commandments, ver. 2.

3. The first Commandment is violated when we place our affections on temporal things, such as riches, honors, and social privileges, rather than on God. Only those obey it who love him supremely and other things subordinately. It is right for us to take a due interest in the objects and pursuits of this life; but it is idolatry for us to suffer this interest to absorb us; let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, knowing that all other needful things shall be supplied. If it is idolatry to thus love too well things which are in themselves innocent, how fearful is the crime of those who cleave to known sin, loving that which God hates, and hence hating God whom they should love! The possibility of thus committing idolatry is affirmed in Col. 3 : 5.

4. Can we love the child, the parent, the husband, the wife, so as to be guilty of idolatry? Care should be exercised in answering this question. The popular impression that we may love our relatives too intensely finds no justification in the Word of God, which everywhere teaches us that, chilled by sin, we love them too little, and commands us to love them more. It finds no sanction in the practical experience of Christians, who uniformly testify that the effect of religion is to expand and mellow the affections. It may be possible, however, to love weakly and foolishly; what we term fondness is often the most narrow and shallow of sentiments, though it is also often the most pretentious and demonstrative. Usually our sin is not that we love our relatives too much, but that we love God too little. They may thus take his place in our hearts, though we do not love them so deeply as we should did we

handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything which is thy neighbor's.

love him above all things. We should beware of representing God as jealous of those affections which in the Scriptures he commends and which by his Spirit he increases; it is only when we love our friends exclusively, satisfied with this exercise, and refusing to set our affections on him, that he charges us with sin. We should also beware of representing God as being enraged at innocent babes because we love them; if he takes them from us for any purpose, it is in the greatest tenderness and faithfulness to both them and us, and with the keenest sympathy with every pain which he inflicts.

5. The adoration of images, as it is practised in the Romish hierarchy, is idolatry. It is in vain to reply that the image is the mere representative of the being who is worshipped; for all the images of the heathen are so considered by their votaries.

6. The adoration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is idolatry; it is giving to the creature the honor due to the Creator. At the same time, her memory is to be cherished and honored as that of one of the most saintly and highly favored of our race.

7. The adoration of relics is also to be ranked as a violation of the second Commandment.

8. The discreet use of pictures and statuary for purposes of ornamentation is not forbidden.

9. We have no right to follow the errors and sins of our parents. If we do, we must suffer for it hereafter, ver. 5.

10. The sinner not only brings misery upon himself, but he entails it upon his posterity, ver. 5.

11. How infinite is the mercy of God who remembers the iniquities of the wicked to the third and fourth generation, but the piety of those who love him to a thousand generations! vers. 5, 6.

12. Parents must account for the instruction and example which they give their children, ver. 5.

13. How happy the hope of the Christian that if he is faithful in prayer and diligent in instruction his children and his children's children shall be saved! ver. 6.

14. Let no child rest in the confidence that since its parents were pious it is therefore safe, ver. 6. None can be saved without a personal interest in the Saviour; and those who perish, after having possessed the advantages of godly instruction in youth, and after having rejected the Holy Spirit, sent in answer to parental prayers, must render a fearful account of privileges abused.

15. The third Commandment is violated: 1. When any one indulges the disgusting habit of profane swearing; 2. When any one uses any name of God lightly, irreverently, or without need; 3. When any one commits perjury, ver. 7.

16. Irreverence towards the divine name begets irreverence towards the divine being, ver. 7.

17. All such irreverence will be punished, however thoughtless and unintentional it may seem to be, ver. 7.

18. The law is spiritual, aiming not simply at the life, but at the inmost heart, ver. 17; and on vers. 13, 14.

19. Most of these precepts are prohibitions rather than positive requirements of duty. They are thus aimed at those who are inclined to sin, vers. 1-17.

LESSON XV.—THE GOLDEN CALF. CHAP. 32 : 1-6 ; 19-20.

We have seen that after the promulgation of the Ten Commandments Moses and Aaron went up near the cloud and darkness which rested upon the mountain, Ex. 19 : 24 ; 20 : 21, where they received further communications. These the great law-giver rehearsed to the people, Ex. 24 : 3, who heartily promised to obey ; he then wrote them, together with the Ten Commandments, in a book, called the Book of the Covenant. On the following morning he erected an altar, and twelve memorial pillars, one for each tribe, at the foot of the mountain, probably just within the barriers; there, with the assistance of young men whom he selected for the purpose, he offered sacrifices for the assembled people. Half the blood was sprinkled upon the altar. The book was then read before the multitudes, who again proffered their obedience. As atonement had been made for their sins, and as they had accepted it and entered into solemn covenant with God, the other half of the blood was sprinkled upon them: the same divine sacrifice which secures our justification must procure sanctifying grace. The book was also sprinkled, Heb. 9 : 19, as a token of its holiness. It was customary in antiquity to seal a covenant with a meal of which both parties partook; and as the Israelites had now entered into covenant with Jehovah, they were invited to partake with him of the covenant feast, through their representatives, Moses, Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, and seventy of their most distinguished elders, Ex. 24 : 9, 11. For this purpose it was necessary that the representatives should repair to the special abode of God, the sanctuary of the mountain which he had chosen, where he

1 AND the people saw that Moses delayed to come down
out of the mountain, and the people assembled about
Aaron, and said to him: Rise, make for us gods, which
shall go before us; for this Moses, the man who led us up
2 out of Egypt, we know not what has become of him. And

himself spread the board and received them as his guests. The appointment had been made before Moses descended to conclude the covenant with the people, Ex. 24 : 1, 2: and at the termination of the ceremonies it was kept, God himself deigning to appear in a glorious and mysterious symbol, Ex. 24 : 9–11. This festival probably took place in the cleft which divides the bold head of the Ras Sufsáfeh; see the essay on the position of Sinai prefixed to the preceding lesson. At its close Aaron and Hur were appointed temporary Governors of the nation; the guests were forbidden to advance further, and probably soon returned to the camp; while Moses ascended to the higher peaks of the mountain. Joshua accompanied him but a little way, Ex. 24 : 2, 13, and he was left alone. For six days he tarried, Ex. 24 : 15–17; and on the seventh he was called to a position still more lofty and mysterious, Ex. 24 : 16, where he remained forty days and forty nights, Ex. 24 : 18. During this time he was receiving instructions concerning his future duties, and specially concerning the erection of the Tabernacle, the appointment of the Aaronic priesthood, and the services of the sanctuary, Ex. chs. 25–31. In conclusion he received from God two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments engraved by the hand of God, Ex. 31 : 18.

1. **Moses delayed.** MURPHY: "Literally, put the expectants to shame by his non-appearance; a word very expressive of the state of mind into which the people had got." He had now been absent forty days, or nearly a month and a half. The awful cloud still abode on the mountain; but it did not thunder and glow with fearful light; and the Israelites had grown accustomed to it, so that familiarity relieved their fears. See Deut. 9 : 15, where the rekindling of the awful fire is recorded.

Assembled. They were not called together by any proper authority; they gathered themselves, moved, of course, by unruly demagogues, such as had probably yielded but a politic obedience to Moses and now desired to use his absence and the idolatrous tendencies of the multitudes for their own advancement. They seem to have assembled tumultuously, with a lawless spirit. Their rebellion against God so soon after they had entered into the most solemn contract with him was remarkable; and they merited the fearful punishment which it called forth.

About Aaron. He was the chief ruler during the absence of Moses, Ex. 24 : 14. They did not come to him as a priest, for he was not yet appointed to the priesthood.

Rise. Bestir thyself. The abrupt and menacing demand of a mob.

Gods. The original is *Elohim;* it is plural in form, and may denote *gods*. Rev. S. CLARK: "But according to the Hebrew idiom the meaning need not be plural, and hence the word is used as the common designation of the true God, Gen. 1 : 1." Most modern critics agree that the meaning here is *a god;* and it is in favor of this view that but one idol was made, and that the people considered it the symbol of Jehovah, the true God, ver. 5. They wished for a sensible object of worship. JAMIESON: "The fact is that they required, like children, to have something to strike their senses; and as the Shechinah, 'the glory of God,' of which they had hitherto enjoyed the sight, was now veiled, they wished for some visible material object as the symbol of the Divine presence."

Which shall go before us. They understood that they were to journey onward to Palestine. It was customary in Egypt to bear the images of the gods before religious processions. It was customary for heathen armies, when marching, to carry their idols in the van, so that they might think themselves under divine guidance. During the battle the objects of worship were usually kept in some position of comparative safety. The pillar of fire and cloud had advanced at the head of the armies of Israel; it was now withdrawn to the mountain; and the people desired another symbol of Jehovah to take its place.

This Moses, the man who led us up, etc. The contemptuous and brutal words of excited and lawless rioters.

We know not what has become of him. They supposed that he had been lost in the darkness upon the mountain, or that he had perished amidst the thunders, Ex. 24; 15-18. In their carnal state of heart it did not occur to them that he was miraculously sustained.

If it be asked why Moses was detained so long, when his absence was adapted to permit such mischievous manifestations, it must be replied that the wilderness was a scene of trial, and that the detention of the lawgiver was expressly designed as a test, not only of his soul, but of the people. They had entered into solemn covenant with Jehovah, after hearing the words of his law which repeatedly forbade the worship of images, and now their disposition was to be proved. To Moses, as the mediator

Aaron said to them: Break off the golden rings which are
in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and
3 bring them to me. And all the people broke off from them
the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them
4 to Aaron. And he took them from their hands, and fashioned

V. 4. *Fashioned it;* there is an ellipsis: he took them from their hands [and melted them], and fashioned it [the gold, probably cast into a thin sheet, suitable for coating the wooden body of the image].

of the covenant, the rebellion of the people presented a severe temptation, vers. 7–14, which he resisted. KURTZ: "And Aaron, who was destined to be the high priest of the covenant nation, was exposed to temptation in consequence of the rebellious desire of the people, and proved how unfit he was by nature for such an office. It was necessary that his natural weakness and unfitness should be made apparent before he entered upon his office, that he might not be high-minded afterwards. This strange anomaly, presented by the priesthood in Israel, which showed so clearly that it was not the perfect and absolute priesthood, was to be brought out at the very first, namely, that the man who offered an atonement for sin was himself a sinner in need of atonement. At the same time, if we would be just in our estimate and comparison of Moses and Aaron, we must not forget that Moses was already in office, and in possession of the grace of office, and that Aaron was not; and also that the firmness of Moses when in office had been preceded by weakness and pusillanimity before the office was conferred upon him, Ex. 3 : 4." It was also a trial of the tribe of Levi, ver. 26, who had probably participated in the sin, but who at the call of Moses rallied to the defence of Jehovah's cause, and thus did much to turn the curse of Gen. 49 : 5–7 into a blessing, Ex. 32 : 29; Deut. 33 : 8–11. But God thus tried his servants not merely to see what was in their hearts, for he already knew. He desired to accomplish high and holy purposes; the concealed wickedness of the wicked was so brought out as to become evident to their own consciousness, and thus afford an opportunity of repentance; those, however, who persisted in it were slain, so that their pernicious influence was destroyed; the survivors were taught by the punishment of the more obdurate to fear Jehovah and keep his commandments; and the lesson descended to after generations. The forty days of our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness perhaps referred mystically to this season of trial.

2. **Break off the golden rings.** Almost all expositors recognize in this requirement an expedient to evade the demand of the people. Aaron counted on their avarice, and hoped that they would not comply with such a condition. He did not willingly enter into their sin; but he was weak in the presence of a fierce mob, and desired to accomplish by strategem that which he feared to attempt by authority. The Orientals are fond of conspicuous ornaments; and many of them would rather suffer, deprived of the necessaries of life, than fail to appear with the proper adornment of jewelry. Much wealth is thus hoarded. The Israelites, even in their bondage, would not be without such gewgaws; for the very poorest possessed them; and they had received from the Egyptians a great abundance at the time of their Exodus, Ex. 12 : 35, 36. Aaron might have demanded money of the fathers, or articles of gold, such as were afterwards used in the construction of the Tabernacle; but he knew that such a demand would be at once complied with. It is observable, also, that he directed the women and youth to deliver their ornaments; for he knew that they were more passionately fond of them than others, and would be more ready to refuse.

3. **All the people.** The compliance was unanimous.

Broke off from them the golden rings. KURTZ: "Aaron had entirely miscalculated. He knew but the surface of the human heart; the depths of its natural disposition were beyond his reach. All the people cheerfully broke off the golden ornaments from their ears, for they were about to accomplish an act of pure self-will; and in that case there is no sacrifice which the human heart will not make. He now found that he was caught in the trap which his own sagacity had laid." The mind, like the body, seems to be subject to contagions, and in periods of general madness, all hasten to do that from which each would shrink at a moment of greater coolness.

4. **He took them from their hands.** See the note on Aaron, under Ex. 4 : 27. He had attempted to save his virtue by stratagem; but he had failed. The stratagem bore on its face the appearance of compliance; and he now feared to withdraw from the arrangement which he himself had proposed. Rev. S. CLARK: "According to a Jewish tradition found in the later Targums, Aaron was terrified by seeing Hur, his colleague in authority, Ex. 24 : 14, slain by the people because he had ventured to oppose them." The fact that Hur does not appear subsequently in the history of Israel, may lend a slight support to the tradition.

it with the carving tool, and made of it a molten calf, and said: These are thy gods, Israel, that led thee up out of
5 the land of Egypt. And Aaron saw, and built an altar before it, and Aaron called out and said: A feast to

V. 4. *Or*, This is thy God, Israel, who; *the plural being merely an expression of dignity or grandeur, "plural of majesty."*

Fashioned it with the carving tool. It needed polishing and decorating after it came from the mould.

A molten calf. See the marginal note of Dr. Bliss, p. 100. The ear-rings of a great host would furnish ample material. JAMIESON: "The Egyptian rings, as seen on the monuments, were round massy plates of metal; and as they were rings of this sort the Israelites wore, their size and number must, in the general collection, have produced a large store of the precious metal." Rev. S. CLARK: "The Israelites must have been familiar with the ox-worship of the Egyptians; perhaps, many of them had witnessed the rites of Mnevis at Heliopolis, almost on the borders of the land of Goshen, and they could not have been unacquainted with the more famous rites of Apis at Memphis. It is expressly said that they yielded to the idolatry of Egypt while they were in bondage, Josh. 24: 14; Ezek. 20: 8; 23: 3, 8. The earliest Jewish tradition derives the golden calf from an Egyptian origin. It seems most likely that the idolatrous tendency of the people had been contracted from the Egyptians, but that it was qualified by what they still retained of the truths revealed to their forefathers. In the next verse, Aaron appears to speak of the calf as if it was a representative of Jehovah: 'To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.' They did not, it should be noted, worship a living Mnevis, or Apis, having a proper name, but only the golden type of the animal. The mystical notions connected with the ox by the Egyptian priests may have possessed their minds, and, when expressed in this modified and less gross manner, may have been applied to the Lord, who had really delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. Their sin then lay, not in their adopting another god, but in their pretending to worship a visible symbol of Him whom no symbol could represent. The close connection between the calves of Jeroboam and this calf is shown by the repetition of the formula, 'which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,' 1 K. 12: 28." It is now known that the Egyptians worshipped not only living animals, but images of animals as well. The calf of the text may not have been designed as an exact likeness of the ox of the Egyptian rites; the idolatry may have been a reminiscence and imitation of that with which they had been familiar in the land of their bondage, while yet it presented features of a different cast, originating in the desire of the Israelites to have an idol that should be understood at once to represent Jehovah instead of Mnevis or Apis, and a worship distinctive and national; hence the calf in place of the Egyptian animal.

These are thy gods. See on ver. 1, the fifth paragraph. The word *Elohim* is plural; but as there was but one image, it was probably used, as always where referring to the true God, with the singular meaning. They probably considered the calf as the representation of Jehovah; but, if so, they already regarded him as a mere God among gods; they said: "this is thy god," the national god of Israel, and not, *this is the God of all the earth.* JAMIESON: "It is inconceivable that they who but a few weeks before had witnessed such amazing demonstrations of the true God, could have suddenly sunk to such a pitch of infatuation and brutish stupidity, as to imagine that human art or hands could make a god that should go before them. But it must be borne in mind, that though by election and in name they were the people of God, they were as yet, in feelings and associations, in habits and tastes, little if at all different from the Egyptians. They meant the calf to be an image, a visible sign or symbol of Jehovah, so that their sin consisted not in a breach of the First, but of the Second Commandment."

That led thee up, etc. They are still affected by the remembrance of their deliverance, which they ascribe to the image as the representative of their national deity.

5. **And Aaron saw.** He saw the manifestations of the people. The *it* of the Common Version, referring to the calf, is probably an erroneous interpretation.

Built an altar. Having taken one step in sin, he was now led to another. See the next note.

A feast to Jehovah. JAMIESON: "A remarkable circumstance, strongly confirmatory of the view that they had not renounced the worship of Jehovah, but in accordance with Egyptian notions had formed an image to be the visible symbol of the divine presence. But there seems to have been

6 Jehovah to-morrow! And they rose early on the morrow, and offered up burnt offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

much of the revelry that marked the feasts of the heathen." Aaron was still a strategist, where he should have been a ruler. Seeing the determination of the people to worship the image, and their readiness to regard it as a symbol of Jehovah, he helped the idolatry in the hope of saving them from turning to other gods than their own. He probably, also, quieted his own uneasy conscience by the course which he pursued, or, perhaps, felicitated himself upon both his tact and his piety. Possibly, also, as KURTZ says, he hoped "to convince the Holy One of Israel himself that they were not about to be guilty of an act of rebellion." There can be no compromise between religion and sin.

6. **Rose early.** Their zeal was conspicuous; but beneath it all was the carnal desire to eat and drink and play. A light people always rise early on holidays devoted to sports.

Burnt offerings. The original word is derived from a root which signifies *to ascend;* it was the ordinary designation of that sort of offering the whole of whose smoke ascended to heaven. It corresponded well, therefore, with our modern expressions *holocaust* and *whole burnt offering*, the burnt offering having been distinguished from other kinds by the fact that it was entirely consumed by the fire. It was not considered as primarily a sacrifice for sin, though this idea was not wholly excluded, but an offering, a gift; hence it is contrasted with sacrifice, Ex. 10: 25; Ps. 40: 6, 9. Rev. ALFRED BARRY: "The meaning, therefore, of the whole burnt offering was the offering by the sacrificer of himself, soul and body, to God, the submission of his will to the will of the Lord. See Ps. 40: 10; 51: 17, 19." Various ritual observances were connected with the presentation of the burnt offering in the Tabernacle; but the service of the text was probably of the simplest kind, as there were few facilities for an elaborate ceremonial before the building of the Tabernacle and the institution of a national priesthood.

Peace offerings. The peace offering embraced chiefly the idea of a communion with a god propitiated by atonement. The fat was burned upon the altar; the breast and shoulder were given to the priests; and the remainder was eaten by the worshipper himself, who thus enjoyed, as it were, a feast with God and with his most intimate servants.

There were three principal classes of sacrifices known to the Israelites: 1. The dedicatory, embracing the burnt-offering and the unbloody oblation, the one presenting to God the person, and the other the property of the offerer. 2. The social, embracing only the peace-offering, whose central idea was the communion of the soul with Jehovah. 3. The expiatory, embracing the sin-offering and the trespass-offering, in which there was implied the confession of guilt, the deprecation of deserved punishment, and the prayer that the death of the victim, which, though the offerer in most cases probably knew it not, pointed forward to the crucifixion, might be accepted instead of his own. It is remarkable, that on this occasion the sacrifices of the people were of the first and second classes exclusively; they presented no sin-offering to Jehovah; and it is supposed that the sin-offering was not as yet instituted; see on Lev. 7: 37.

Sat down to eat. They ate those portions of the peace-offerings which, according to custom, pertained to the offerer.

And drink. The expression when applied to festivities, is usually employed with reference to wine. This they may have procured from the caravans of the desert, or more probably from the Amalekites, whom they had conquered at Rephidim, and who had agricultural settlements in the neighborhood, as is proved by their remains but recently discovered. Its use probably contributed to the lasciviousness noticed in the next words.

To play. The Hebrew word implies the lewdness of the plays in which the people indulged. They probably consisted largely of dancing and leaping around the idol, with such orgies as were common to all heathen festivals.

When this revelry was at its height, Jehovah announced to Moses the defection of the people, using the expression "*thy* people" thus repudiating them, and bidding Moses to forbear all intercession, that he might cut them off. He knew that he would yield to intercession should it be made, as our Saviour, when upon the earth, knew that should he stand by the death-bed of Lazarus he would yield to the entreaties of the sisters and restore the brother to health, John 11: 15. He proposed after the destruction of the Israelites to begin anew, to put Moses in the place of Abraham, and to thus rear another and more obedient nation. The mediator of the law at once replied in an agony of earnest supplication. As God had said "*thy* people" to him, thus repudiating the rebellious nation, so he boldly says "*thy* people" to God, reminding Jehovah that he had led them from Egypt, that the Egyptians would scoff when they should learn how the Israelites had perished in the mountains.

19 And it came to pass when he drew near the camp, and
saw the calf, and the dances, that the anger of Moses was
kindled, and he cast from his hands the tables, and broke
20 them beneath the mountain. And he took the calf which
they had made, and burned it in the fire, and crushed it to

and that he had made the most positive promises to the patriarchs, which could only be kept by preserving and guiding their rebellious descendants. The plea of Moses prevailed, although Jehovah did not at this time announce his decision in explicit terms. The propositions of God to his servant were not made in hypocrisy; they expressed his justice towards the idolaters and his approbation of Moses; yet he foresaw, of course, the merciful result. They were also of importance as affording a trial of Moses such as perhaps no other soul, except that of Jesus, ever endured: the guilt of Israel could not be denied; and the prospect of becoming the honored founder of a great nation, from whom the Messiah was to be born, was more dazzling than that of universal empire. Yet Moses faltered not for an instant. It was his duty as mediator to plead; he had divine aid to be unselfish. He overcame, and the reward of his faithfulness and self-renunciation is greater than would have been that of standing as the founder of the chosen people.

But a mediator is not of one. He had plead with God for the people; he next descended to plead with the people in behalf of God. He found the mountain again burning with the kindled fires of divine justice, Deut. 9:15. On his way down he met Joshua, who seems to have been lingering without the camp, perhaps anxious for the safety of his master, yet not daring to penetrate the cloud in his search. They heard the noise of the festival before they saw the rioters; and Joshua, with the instinct of a soldier, attributed it to some sudden attack of the foe, or to civil war. Moses did not tell him of the divine communication concerning the crime of the people; but merely sought to quiet his apprehensions and his rising martial ardor, by calling his attention to the kind of noise, which was that of singing.

19. **Saw the calf.** It is remarkable that one of the most frequented paths from the Ras Sufsáfeh commands no view of the plain, until the traveller has completed his descent, and that it leads directly to the foot of the hill on which tradition has located the golden calf. E. H. PALMER: "Often in descending, while the precipitous sides of the ravine hid the tents from my gaze, have I heard the sounds of voices from below, and thought how Joshua had said unto Moses, 'There is a voice of war in the camp.'"

The anger of Moses was kindled. There is a justifiable anger toward incorrigible sinners. Complacency in view of sin usually proceeds from secret sympathy with it, or from a want of divine purity. And intimate communion with Jehovah helps us to burn with holy indignation when his laws are broken.

And broke them. Since the Israelites had broken the covenant, it was meet that the tables on which its chief terms were engraved should also be broken. They could no longer be monumental witnesses of the covenant, since the covenant itself had apparently ceased to exist. The action was doubtless observed by the guilty people; and was intended to make a vivid impression upon their minds.

Beneath the mountain. Where the scene of unholy mirth first burst upon his vision.

20. The first step of Moses was to destroy the idol; afterwards he investigated and punished the sin. How startling must have been the intrusion of his indignant and awful form amidst the unseemly festivities! What terror must have fallen upon the foolish sinners! The instant and marked effect of his presence shows what might have been accomplished at an earlier moment, had Aaron possessed sufficient decision of character.

Took the calf. None daring to resist the solitary man.

Burned it. It is very possible that he was acquainted with the chemical art of calcining metals, for the purpose of reducing them to powder. The Egyptians possessed an extensive knowledge of metallurgy. Or he may have burned it in the fire to mar its form, and as an act of symbolic condemnation, reducing it to powder by other means. JAMIESON: "The powder of malleable metals can be ground so fine as to resemble dust from the wings of a moth or butterfly; and these dust-particles will float in water for hours, and in a running stream for days."

Strewed it on the water. The water of "the brook that descended out of the mount," Deut. 9:21. The most considerable stream of the neighborhood, though it issues at the base of another mountain, skirts the western side of Jebel Mousa, and falls upon the plain before the Ras Sufs feh, in close connection with the cliff.

powder, and strewed it on the water, and made the sons of Israel drink it.

And made the sons of Israel drink. Even if the powder sank, the symbolism of the action was the same. Rev. S. CLARK: "The idol was brought to nothing, and the people were forced to swallow their own sin. See Mic. 7 : 18, 14."

The next care of Moses was to set before Aaron the enormity of his transgression. But Aaron was by this time thoroughly ashamed; his strategy had been turned to naught; his self-appreciation had ceased to exist. The confused and rambling and pointless reply which he made is the language of a weak man, fallen from the heights of pride, anxious to palliate his guilt, yet with nothing to plead in its extenuation. The idolatrous rites were terminated; but Moses observed symptoms of licentiousness and insubordination among the people; the storm, which seemed at first to be driven away, still muttered in the distance, and threatened to return; the people were literally "broken loose" from the restraints of law and morality, and that, too, in the presence of their enemies, the conquered Amalekites of the neighborhood, who witnessed with pleasure and contempt their fall from order and purity to anarchy and debauchery. The *naked* of the Common Version is now rejected by nearly all critics. In such emergencies severity is often the greatest love; the beastly mob-spirit tramples upon forbearance and quails before force. There was not only wisdom but mercy in the suggestion of Napoleon, that a great riot should be treated with grape-shot first and blank cartridges afterwards. Nipped in the bud, it cannot bring forth its baleful fruit of pillage and carnage. The camp seems to have been fortified after the battle of Rephidim; and Moses, acting with the greatest decision, stood in the gate, and had proclamation made that those who were decisively on the side of Jehovah should come to him. This afforded a fair opportunity for the whole nation to secure amnesty and pardon. There was, however, no general movement except in the tribe of Levi, to which Moses himself belonged; it rallied in a body under his command. God often uses the sacred sentiment of kinship to lead us aright. Individuals of other tribes probably also joined the little army. For the most part, however, the Israelites preferred to retire within their tents, willing to abandon the mob, but unwilling to fight against it. A large company still maintained an attitude of defiance; they were assailed by the warriors of Jehovah, who fought with a holy zeal, forbidden to spare even their own brothers. The zeal of the Levites for Jehovah was the means of procuring his special blessing, Deut. 33 : 9, 10. About three thousand persons were slain before the rebellion was quelled and order restored. This work accomplished, Moses returned to Mount Sinai, where he engaged in the most earnest supplications for the sinful nation, Ex. 32 : 30–32. He preferred death to the rejection of his people, and thus again showed himself the type of Christ, who laid down his life for the world. He was heard; and Jehovah renewed his promises of mercy, Ex. 32 : 33, 34; but with a qualification that the people should suffer, though they should not be destroyed, a qualification which explains the plagues with which they were immediately afflicted, Ex. 32 : 35, and in part, also, the exclusion of the whole generation from the promised land, Ex. 32 : 34; Num. 14 : 26–35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. A mere vow to serve God is not all that he demands; he requires the fulfilment of it. The people had solemnly accepted his service; but in a few days they repudiated it, and returned to idolatry. A conversion to God is tested not by the amount of feeling which attends it, but by the stability of the soul in its new course of life, ver. 1.

2. As the delay of Moses encouraged his people to sin, so the patient delay of Jesus to judge the world leads many to obduracy and carelessness, ver. 1; Matt. 24 : 48–51; Luke 12 : 45; 2 Pet. 3 : 3, 4. In respect to this, Moses was a type of Christ, and the Israelites were a type of their modern imitators.

3. How hard it still is to believe in a God whom we cannot see, ver. 1. Yet there is a special promise to such faith, John 20 : 26–29. Pantheism, which knows no god but Nature, and all science which would make Nature self-generative and self-governing, proceed largely from the carnal desire for a god that can be seen.

4. The folly of seeking to avoid the demands of sinners by strategy, ver. 2. A determined No is the only safety.

5. What immense sacrifices wicked people will make in order to indulge their sinful propensities, ver. 3. If sin leads to such sacrifices, how unhappy is the life of a sinner!

6. The use of images in our worship, even though they are considered as representatives of Jehovah, is a crime, vers. 4, 5.

7. When we dally, and temporize, and compromise with sinners, we simply put ourselves into their hands, vers. 2–5.

8. One sin leads to another, vers. 2, 4, 5.

9. That worship is vain, which does not recognize our sinfulness and our need of atonement; on ver. 6.

10. All false religions are attended with immoralities, ver. 6.

11. God's anger burns against sin; and if he delays to punish, it is in accordance with the intercession of Jesus and the Church, and in the hope that delay may lead to penitence, vers. 7-14; Rom. 2: 2-6.

12. If we are not indignant at wrong, it is because we are not in sympathy with God and the right, ver. 19.

13. Prolonged communion with God makes the soul zealous for his honor, ver. 19. If your zeal flags, kindle it by prayer and holy meditation and reading.

14. Sin is cowardly. If you seem disposed to acquiesce, there is no limit to its boastfulness and tyranny. If you meet it sternly and vigorously, one man shall put ten thousand to flight, vers. 19, 20.

15. All the wealth which men invest in the cause of wrong shall be lost, and more than lost, ver. 20. On the other hand, all the wealth which we invest in religious enterprises is treasure laid up in heaven for our enjoyment through eternity.

16. Every man must ultimately swallow his own sin, ver. 20.

17. A ruler should be made of stern material. Contrast Aaron and Moses, vers. 2-5, 19, 20.

18. The ruler is greatly responsible for the conduct of the people, vers. 2-5, 19, 20.

19. Those who sin shall have but a stammering excuse when arraigned at the bar of God, vers. 21-24.

20. How we should plead for sinners, vers. 11-13, 31, 32.

21. God is moved with compassion for sinners by the intercessions of his people, vers. 7-14, 31-34.

LESSON XVI.—THE PEOPLE FORGIVEN. CHAP. 33: 12-20.

Having heard the prayer of Moses, and consented not to destroy Israel, Jehovah directed him to continue the journey to Palestine, ver. 1. He did not, however, call the people *my people*, he termed them "the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt," ver. 1. He also declined to lead them in person as hitherto; but he promised to send an angel before them, who should drive out the heathen; and this withdrawal of his presence was an expression not only of justice but of mercy: "I will not go up with thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." Rev. S. CLARK: "Thus were the people forcibly warned that his presence could prove a blessing to them only on condition of their keeping their part of the covenant. If they failed in this, his presence would be to them 'a consuming fire,' Deut. 4: 24." Jehovah also directed them to put off their jewels. JAMIESON: "In seasons of mourning it is customary with Eastern people to lay aside all gewgaws, and divest themselves of their jewels, their gold, and everything rich and splendid in their dress. This token of their sorrow the Lord required of his offending people." He commanded them to do this "that he might know what to do unto them," that is, that he might judge, by their ready compliance or by their disobedience, concerning their state of heart. The language is accommodated to our modes of thought; God read the heart, but he demanded, as he still demands, an outward sign of the inward grace, a deed as well as a word, a life corresponding to the profession of repentance. The sentiment of the heart is confirmed and fixed by its expression; hence to demand the expression was helpful to the penitents. The Israelites immediately complied with the divine mandate; when they learned that the presence of Jehovah was to be withdrawn, they mourned and abstained from their customary decorations. According to the interpretation of ver. 6 which is sustained by the best authorities, they even abstained, during the remainder of their journey, from the use of jewelry, a gratification which was so sadly associated in their memories with their sin and the judgment which followed it; "they stripped themselves of their jewelry from Mount Horeb" onward. Observing their penitential grief, Jehovah ordered Moses to pitch a tent without the camp: this was not the Tabernacle, as the Common Version assumes, for that was constructed afterwards; but it was probably the tent in which Moses had been accustomed to dwell; and it was only temporarily set apart for the purpose mentioned in the text, until the Tabernacle could be erected. But the people were still made to feel their sins. The tent was pitched "afar off" from the camp; Jehovah would not come within: only Moses and his faithful servant Joshua were permitted to enter it, and the cloud descended from the mountain and rested upon the earth before its door, but came no nearer to the offending nation. When Moses went forth to this now sacred structure, "all the people rose up," an Oriental attitude of reverence, "and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses," perhaps in suspense as to what was about to occur, as they had been smitten with consternation when the dwelling of their leader was removed from the midst of their tents. When the pillar descended, delighted by this token

12 AND Moses said to Jehovah: See, thou sayest to me:
Lead up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom
thou wilt send with me. And thou hast said: I have
known thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my
13 eyes. And now, if indeed I have found favor in thine
eyes, let me, I pray thee, know thy way, that I may know
thee, in order that I may find favor in thy sight; and see
thou that this nation is thy people.

of favor, they worshipped, giving, thus, additional evidence of their penitence. Those who desired to communicate specially with Jehovah repaired to this tent, where Moses, privileged to talk with the Being whose voice issued from the cloud, presented their requests: it was on this account termed not the "tent of the congregation," as the Common Version renders the name, but the "tent of meeting," because there God met his penitent people. In those days of anxiety and dread, when every movement of Moses was noted with intense interest, it was observed that while he passed between the presence of Jehovah and the camp, Joshua, his servant, remained in the seclusion of the distant tent. In the lesson we have a brief summary of the interview which occurred between Jehovah and Moses at the tent of meeting.

12. **Moses said to Jehovah.** Talking as with a friend, and receiving vocal answers from the cloud which stood before his tent, ver. 11.

Thou sayest to me. The reference is to the divine words in ver. 1.

This people. Moses does not yet venture to say *thy* people; see on the expression in vers. 13 and 16.

Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send. See ver. 2, where God promises to send "an angel," but does not tell his name or his special character. Moses would learn further about him.

I have known thee by name. See Ex. 3: 4, where Jehovah calls Moses by his name; also Isai. 43: 1; 49: 1. To recognize one by his name expresses intimacy.

Thou hast also found favor in my eyes. See Ex. 32: 10, where God gives Moses the strongest possible assurance of his favor.

These expressions of intimate friendship and confidence seemed to Moses inconsistent with God's reticence in withholding the name and character of the promised angel, and the full communication of his purpose concerning the Israelites.

13. **And now.** An appeal to the considerations adduced in the preceding verses.

If indeed I have found favor. As thou hast said; see on ver. 12.

I pray thee. Moses preserved the attitude of the suppliant, though he came with admirable boldness to the throne of grace. Some persons pray in a tone of irreverence or even of dictation.

Thy way. Thy purpose concerning Israel, the mode in which thou hast determined to deal with the sinful people, and the meaning of thy withdrawal from us and of the substitution of the angel. How much of severity is to be visited upon us? how much of mercy may we receive? All this Moses desires to ascertain "now;" he asks for a present blessing, in the exercise of a present faith.

That I may know thee. Thy inmost thoughts concerning Israel; thy justice, if the people are to be judged; thy mercy, if they may obtain mercy. Moses desired to have such intimate knowledge of Jehovah as belonged to the friend. But in those days of trial God had veiled his purpose, that he might lead the people to repentance. Hence Moses was in terrible suspense.

In order that I may find favor. That I may indeed find it, according to thine own words; see on ver. 12, last paragraph. There seemed to be a discrepancy between the gracious assurances which Moses had received in the past, and the present reticence of God, a discrepancy which threw Moses into anxiety. He desired its removal. He did not demand it as a right, however; he asked it as a favor.

This nation. Sinful as it is.

Is thy people. Here burst forth the real thought of the suppliant's heart. As the fervor of prayer increased, he gained boldness to remind Jehovah again that the nation was his own. On the mountain, God had seemed to repudiate it, Ex. 32: 7; and in his latest communication he had declined to acknowledge it as his own, Ex. 33: 1; and it was this apparent reprobation of Israel that pierced the heart of Moses, and that he sought reverently but bravely to reverse. The expression of the text

14 And he said my presence shall go, and I will give thee
rest.
15 And he said to him: If thy presence go not, lead us not
16 up hence. And wherein shall it be known now that I have
found favor in thine eyes, I and thy people? Is it not in
that thou goest with us? And we shall be distinguished,
I and thy people, from all the people that are on the face
of the ground.

V. 14. *Or*, my face shall go. V. 15. *Or*, thy face go.

is therefore the very heart of his prayer. He plead that God would reveal his purpose concerning the idolatrous people; and also that in the formation of the purpose God would consider that the people were his own, and would deal with them as such.

14. **My presence shall go.** The judgment expressed in ver. 2 is in these words revoked. The prayer of Moses prevailed. Jehovah promised to go in person, and not to send a mere angel as the leader of Israel.

I. Not the angel of ver. 2.

Rest. Rev. S. CLARK: "This was the common expression for the possession of the promised land, Deut. 3 : 20; Josh. 1 : 13, 15; 22 : 4; see Heb. 4 : 8."

Moses had not dared to ask the favor which Jehovah thus granted; he had supposed that the people must go under the guidance of a mere angel; but the prayer of his heart, if not of his lips, was that God himself would still lead Israel; and "He who sees in secret" answered him openly. This shows how God gives before we ask and more than we ask. In the feebleness of our faith we sometimes question if God answers prayer. Assuredly he does; but this is only half the gracious truth; he exceeds it; he gives us more than we are able to ask or think.

15. **If thy presence go not.** This outburst of emotion, at the relief of his anxieties concerning the withdrawal of the divine presence, shows us what was the real burden of his heart. He would have preferred that the people should remain in the wilderness, denied the possession of Palestine, if they could not pursue their enterprise under the immediate guidance of Jehovah. The reason is assigned in the next verse.

16. **Wherein shall it be known, etc.** Known to Moses and the people. The withdrawal of God would place them under a kind of ban. They would pursue their way with the conviction that they were cast out of Jehovah's love. The consequences would be deplorable: discouragement and panic would ensue; and spiritual declension, such as can be prevented only by the conviction of the divine affection, would characterize the future history of the abandoned people; for the graces of the soul flourish only in an atmosphere of heavenly love. Not only would the tenderness of God be thus withdrawn, but his faithfulness in discipline, which, though the expression of his justice, is also the dictate of his love, would no longer keep the rebellious nation from lapsing into idolatry, Ex. 34 : 9. The feeling of Moses was reasonable; it was better that the Israelites should perish in the wilderness than that they should conquer the inhabitants of Palestine only to be conquered by the fearful corruptions of their vanquished foes.

I and thy people. Here two things are notable; first that Moses identifies himself with the Israelites, and insists upon sharing their fate, whatever it may be; and second, that he again reminds Jehovah that the people are his. Was ever such self-abnegation and such persistence in prayer?

Is it not in that thou goest with us? This had been hitherto the sign of divine favor. Any other arrangement must necessarily have been less favorable, since the actual presence of Jehovah is the highest favor possible. Any other arrangement, therefore, would be a withdrawal or diminution of the divine favor. Under the circumstances, the only possible sign of restored favor was the personal presence of Jehovah.

And we shall be distinguished. Not merely by the presence of the pillar of fire and cloud; but by the moral effect which the favor of Jehovah ever produces. See the remarks on the probable effect of its withdrawal in the first note on this verse.

I and thy people. See the second note of this verse. Moses reiterated the phrase, in that spirit of reverential boldness which characterized his whole prayer.

17 And Jehovah said to Moses: This thing also which thou hast spoken will I do; for thou hast found favor in mine eyes, and I know thee by name.

18 And he said: Let me, I pray thee, see thy glory!

19 And he said: I will make all my goodness pass before thy

17. **This thing....will I do.** Moses has fully prevailed; God yields everything to his petition; Jehovah will personally lead his people.

For thou hast found favor, etc. See on the words in ver. 12. Moses had been tempted to doubt his acceptance; he had found a discrepancy between the gracious words of Jehovah on former occasions and his present threats of withdrawal and his reticence concerning his purposes. He is now fully reassured. The divine approval rests upon him as a person and upon the manner in which he has filled his mediatorial office.

18. **I pray thee.** Moses begins this most daring request with a proper sense of its greatness; he uses a form of the most humble and importunate entreaty.

Thy glory. Let me see thy unveiled and essential glory, thyself as thou art. That this is the meaning is evident from the following considerations: 1. It is certain that Moses sought for something surpassing all former revelations. But he had already seen Jehovah in the symbol of the cloud, talking to him "face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend," ver. 11; see Deut. 34: 10; he and the people had seen "the glory of Jehovah" in the form of "devouring fire," Ex. 16: 7, 10; 24: 16, 17; he and the elders of Israel had beheld the "similitude" of Jehovah at the covenant festival on Mount Sinai, where there was a clearer manifestation of the divine being than had been made in the cloud, Ex. 24: 9-11; Num. 12: 8. It seemed that there was nothing more to grant except an absolute unveiling of the divine essence. 2. The request was one which could not be granted without producing the death of Moses, ver. 20. 3. The yearning of Moses was only that experienced by all saints whose souls have been blessed with much divine intimacy; they yearn to see God without a cloud between. It may be that in regard to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit this yearning of the soul can never be fulfilled, that we shall see God even in heaven only as he is presented in the person of Jesus, and that this shall hereafter perfectly satisfy every longing; nevertheless, the prayer finds in our hearts an echo which enables us to understand it.

If it is asked why Moses made such a request just at this time, we answer that several circumstances conjoined to render it natural and opportune. 1. Moses had doubted his acceptance with God; and now all his doubts are removed; he is received more graciously than usual; and his petitions are more than answered. At such seasons of joy the heart is bold, the faith is strong, and nothing seems too great to ask. 2. He had keenly felt the reticence of God, ver. 13, 14. He deeply regretted his ignorance of the divine nature and purposes. The prayer of the text was but the yearning of his heart under this sense of seclusion from the inmost mystery of the deity; and the graciousness of his divine friend in exceeding his requests made the moment opportune for the presentation of his last and greatest petition. 3. The divine mercy which in spite of sin yielded to the prayer of a man and consented to forgive the people and restore the broken covenant was so surprising and overwhelming that Moses could but desire to study more closely its very source. 4. He sought the manifestation of the divine being in order that now, as the covenant was about to be renewed, and as he was about to stand again as mediator between Jehovah and the people, he might speak with perfect intelligence of the Being whose mind he was to interpret.

19. This petition, daring as were its terms, God answered as to its spirit, though not as to its letter. It could not be literally fulfilled; but something safer and hence better was granted in its stead. Thus often are our prayers received; they win not the identical favor for which we plead, but that which God in his wisdom knows to be greater. In this substitution of another blessing for that which he sought was evinced the imperfection of the Old Dispensation and the need of the New. KURTZ: "His mediatorial office would necessarily be incomplete so long as he had not enjoyed as close and direct intercourse with Jehovah, on the one hand, as with the people, on the other, and so long as he had not seen and known Jehovah in his true and essential form. It was evident, then, that a merely human mediator did not suffice. Something more was needed to give completeness to the mediation between Jehovah and the people." It was supplied in Christ, "who is in the bosom of the Father," John 1: 18.

19. **All my goodness.** He seems to allude to his mercy in the pardon of sin, which is yet consistent with justice; see Ex. 34: 67. It was this to which Moses had appealed, and which had so far surpassed the petition as to create wonder; hence it was this which he would most desire to understand.

face, and will call out the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will show favor to whom I show favor, and will have
20 compassion on whom I have compassion. And he said: Thou canst not see my face; for no man shall see my face
21 and live. And Jehovah said: Behold there is a place

Will call out the name of Jehovah. Not the word; but the significance of it, the character of the Being who bore it. See on Ex. 6: 3.

I will show favor, etc. Jehovah's will was the ground of the mercy which he was about to show the people. Thus is it ever the ground of the divine favor. Rev. S. CLARK: "St. Paul applies these words to the election of Jacob in order to overthrow the self-righteous boasting of the Jews, Rom. 9: 15." They were probably uttered on the present occasion in order to prevent both Moses and the Israelites from vain self-congratulation in the returning smiles of prosperity; and they formulate a principle of the divine government which should forever check all self-righteousness. God has mercy on whom he will; he is a sovereign in the dispensation of his grace. But such expressions must not be so interpreted as to imply that he uses his royal prerogatives in an unreasonable manner; while his will is the ground of the favor which he bestows, it is guided by considerations of the highest wisdom; and though we cannot know in all instances what these are, we may be assured that the Infinite Wisdom cannot act in an irrational manner. Nor must the words be so interpreted as to sanction the error that God selected with partiality those whom he wills to bless; while his will is the ultimate ground of his favor, he has stated certain conditions which control its decisions; and those who comply with these conditions shall be saved. Thus, while he is a sovereign, he is not a despot, reigning in the spirit of caprice and favoritism. He is the Infinite Reason and the Infinite Justice; and he "is no respecter of persons."

20. **My face.** My unvailed Being.

No man shall see my face and live. It was the conviction of the Israelites that no one could look on even the vailed manifestations of God and live; see on Ex. 3: 6. This, however, was an error; but it was based upon the truth expressed in the text.

The question may arise whether, even had there been no peril, it would have been possible for Moses to see that which he desired to behold; whether God, as a spirit, is not destitute in his essence of all that the immediate perceptions of man can recognize? If we grant that this is true of the Father and the Holy Spirit, we shall still be in doubt concerning its application to the Word, the Son, the second person of the Trinity, who was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and whose mode of existence previous to the incarnation is a mystery to us. See on Ex. 3: 2.

Rev. S. CLARK: "The promise here given was to be fulfilled on the morrow, when the mediator was to receive the twofold reward of his spiritual wrestling; the covenant was to be renewed with the nation according to its original terms, and he himself was to be permitted to penetrate more deeply into the mysteries of the divine nature than had ever before been granted to mortal man.

"It was vouchsafed to St. Paul, as it had been to Moses, to have special 'visions and revelations of the Lord,' 2 Cor. 12: 1-4. He was 'caught up into the third heaven,' and heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for a man to utter.' But he had, also, like Moses, to find the narrow reach of the intellect of man in the region of Godhead. It was long after he had heard the unspeakable words in Paradise that he spoke of the Lord as dwelling 'in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see,' 1 Tim. 6: 16. He knew of the Mediator greater than Moses, Heb. 3: 5, 6, who being 'in the bosom of the Father,' had declared him in a higher sense than he had been declared to Moses; but still it remains true that 'no man hath seen God at any time,' John 1: 18."

This is the proper place to discuss the philosophy of prayer. It is admitted that the laws of the physical universe are uniform, that the winds, the clouds, the stars, the contamination of disease, and all physical forces, are governed by certain fixed laws. How, then, can prayer affect the course of events upon the earth? 1. It may induce God to work a miracle, in which case the laws of matter are not destroyed, or for a time suspended; but are overcome by the exercise of a higher law of mind, so that the uniformity of the results which they ordinarily produce is no longer observed. See the remarks on miracles under Ex. 4: 2-4. 2. While the universe of matter is controlled by means of fixed laws, the expression of an order-loving God, the mind of man is not subject to precise and constant forces; the will is free from the law of gravity; the soul may be moved by spiritual presences; and God may turn it by the interposition of his Holy Spirit. Such answers to prayer as come through the decisions of human wills conflict with no known laws of the universe; they are, on the contrary, in direct accord with that law of our natures by virtue of which we are exposed to the contact of various external influences. 3. The laws of matter may be used by God without being miraculously overcome by the

22 with me, and take thy stand upon the rock. And it shall be when my glory passes by, that I will place thee in a

higher law of his will. Man employs the law of gravity in utilizing the water-course; and indeed the conquests of civilization over nature are made by means of his ability to employ the laws of nature in the accomplishment of his purposes. Surely God is not more impotent than man. Surely he can guide in the interest of his cause the forces which he himself has created. 4. It is conceivable that the Creator, who is Almighty and who foreknows all things, has so arranged the forces of nature that they shall usually produce, where it is desirable, such results as he foresaw his people would need. In many instances this would seem to be demonstrated by history, as where great battles, on whose issue turned the destinies of the world, have been decided by eclipses or stars, or the approach of night, or other events which occurred by virtue of laws whose constant operation for centuries can be proved, and which yet occurred at the moment most opportune for the defence of divine truth and the advancement of human happiness. If even puny man can so arrange a series of natural forces as that they shall produce at a given moment far in the future the most startling results, surely God must possess a kindred ability, and in an infinitely higher degree. It may be said, also, that human souls have often been produced with reference to the same precise effects. One can scarcely study the careers of such men as Bunyan, Carey, and Judson, without the conviction that they were raised up at the appropriate moment, and in accordance with the divine prearrangement, to give decisive direction to the events of history. But in saying this we must allow for the fact that the will is not subject to precise mechanical forces. Yet, as skillful men form combinations of minds, calculating in advance the precise effect of each member of the combination, and thus producing the most remarkable results, so may the Father of spirits, from whom all souls derive their powers, and whose wisdom so infinitely excels that of man that our highest exhibitions of sagacity are but foolishness in the comparison. We must also recognize the fact that he exercises a continual sway over the wills of men, by the presence of his Spirit, so that he has not needed to prearrange their decisions in all instances, preferring, rather, to pre-determine the occasions and the extent of his own special interventions. 5. We have suggested, therefore, another difficulty. God has foreknown all the events of history. In so far as they are beneficent, he has predetermined them. The events which he causes in answer to prayer are ever beneficent; they belong, therefore, to that class which he has pre-determined. How can prayer, therefore, alter his decisions? The answer is simple. Each prayer has been pre-determined; and as God's determinations are never arbitrary, but ever based upon good reasons, he has determined the beneficent events of history with a foreknowledge of the prayers of his people, and in consideration of them. In so far as they are in accordance with his will, they constituted a part of the reasons which guided him in the formation of his plans. But here, again, we must exercise caution lest we conceive his pre-determinations to be hard and mechanical, like the inevitable movements of a machine which is composed of insensate matter. We must leave to God his personality, his free will, and his present emotions, as also to man. Thus there will be apparent inconsistencies in the divine government, absolute promises, and afterward appearances of peril in their issue; as in the lesson Jehovah desires to destroy Israel and make of Moses a great people, in spite of his covenant with the patriarchs. When Moses prayed, that in consideration of which the covenant had been declared absolute was heard, and the danger, which had been real, was averted. These inconsistencies are, therefore, like the perturbations of the planets, which were once thought to menace the stability of the solar system, but which are now found to have such compensations as to bring back the safety, which, should the apparently irregular movement continue, would be imperiled.

21-23. The remaining verses of the chapter are thus explained by MURPHY: "*My back* is my averted, mediate, extrinsic self, visible to man in my works, my word, and my personal manifestations to my people. The place near the Lord where Moses was to stand, the cleft of the rock in which he was to be put, the hand which was to cover him while the Lord in his glory passed by, and to be taken away that he might see the Lord when his face was averted, are the simple elements of a real scene, in which the Lord conveyed to Moses the deep things of his glorious grace in a manner which was exactly adapted to the capacity of the enquirer. Whether the cleft of the rock was the grotto under the ruined mosque on the top of Jebel Mousa it is not worth while to enquire." It is almost needless to say that the hand, back, etc., were figurative appearances, vailing the deadly glories of Jehovah.

The perfect fulfilment of the promise is recorded in the next chapter. Moses was commanded to prepare two tables of stone, like those which he had broken. The first were both prepared and inscribed by God, Ex. 32 : 16; these were to be prepared by man and inscribed by God. Neither set of tables was large; for Moses bore them in his hands. On the second set, as on the first, God inscribed the Ten Commandments, Ex. 34 : 28; Deut. 4 : 13; 9 : 10, 11; 10 : 1, 4, and especially Deut. 5 : 6-22. Neither man nor beast was permitted upon the mountain when Moses ascended early in the morning. Jehovah came in the cloud and proclaimed the meaning of his memorial name and the nature of his

cleft of the rock, and will cover my hand over thee while
23 I am passing by; and I will take away my hand, and
thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.

government. The words were much like those which are appended to the second commandment; but with this remarkable difference, that while there the divine justice is mentioned first, and dwelt upon most largely, as was proper in the midst of a law which was the expression of justice, here mercy has the first and the largest place, as was fitting an occasion when the people were forgiven and received again into his love. At the exhibition of such glory and the proclamation of such abounding grace, Moses fell upon his face and worshipped, encouraged to present even larger petitions than he had before preferred, asking that Jehovah would not only go with the people to the promised land, but take them for an inheritance. Here also he identified himself with them, using the word "us," a type of him who partakes our nature, and is not ashamed to call us brethren. God heard and answered; he renewed in the most formal manner the broken covenant, reiterating its conditions, and adding cautions as to another rebellion. Moses remained forty days and forty nights in this sublime communion with God: and when he descended, though at first he knew it not, his face shone with peculiar light, so that, when with the people, he wore a vail, which he removed when he went into the tent of meeting to talk with Jehovah, who seems to have descended to the door as before. The vail of Moses is regarded by Paul in 2 Cor. 3: 12-15, as a symbol of that vail which in the Old Dispensation concealed the glory of God and which by the advent of Christ has been removed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. The miserable state of those from whom God withdraws, ver. 1; and on ver. 15.

2. Yet is the withdrawal of God in some cases a mercy; where the soul is determined to sin, did he remain, the struggle might be so great as to cause sickness, insanity, or death, ver. 3.

3. The mere Providence of God, which gives us temporal success, is not a blessing which can satisfy the Christian heart, vers. 2, 12.

4. If there have been national sins they should be followed by national repentance, ver. 4.

5. The propriety of appointing special seasons of national humiliation and prayer, vers. 4, 5.

6. The manner in which such seasons should be observed, vers. 4-6.

7. God demands not only a sentiment of sorrow for our sins, but a spirit of prompt obedience in turning from them, vers. 5, 6.

8. A "meeting-house" is not a place where the people meet one another, but where they meet God, ver. 7.

9. We should pay all respect to the ministers of God, ver. 8.

10. The humility which becomes the suppliant at the throne of grace; "I pray thee:" "I beseech thee," vers. 13, 18.

11. There is also a holy boldness in prayer which God loves, and which is consistent with the greatest humility, vers. 12-18. We should pray, feeling that God loves to give largely.

12. The intimacy of Moses with God is but an instance of the intimacy which every saint may enjoy, ver. 11.

13. We should pray to a God who is near, and not imagine him to be afar off. Prayer is talking to God in a becoming spirit; and the child of God is privileged to draw nigh and talk face to face with his Heavenly Father, ver. 11.

14. How we should wrestle in prayer for sinners, vers. 12-16.

15. We should be specially desirous to know the nature and the revealed counsel of God; and we should pray for divine aid in pursuing this study, vers. 12, 13.

16. God does not resent the reverent endeavor to understand the sublimest mysteries of his Being, vers. 18-23; nay, so far as it is possible, he reveals himself to those who search.

17. God often gives before we ask, and more than we ask, on ver. 14.

18. It is better to die than to live without the presence of God, ver. 15.

19. The present experience of God's presence is the only proper evidence of his favor. No memories of the past, or vague hopes of the future, will suffice, ver. 16.

20. Those who enjoy the presence of God are distinguished from all others, ver. 16.

21. The readiness of God to forgive the worst of sinners, vers. 14, 17.

22. National offences are forgiven when there is national penitence and amendment, vers. 4-6, 14, 17.

23. God's will is supreme, even in bestowing mercy, ver. 19. He is not bound to pardon. We do not earn salvation; it is his free gift. Yet he has graciously promised to bestow it impartially upon all who seek it in the appointed way.

24. Moses as mediator was a type of Christ. Yet how infinitely superior is the mediation of Christ, who is both God and man, who has seen the Father, and told us of him, vers. 18-23.

LESSON XVII.—THE TABERNACLE SET UP. CHAP. 40 : 17–30.

ITS NAMES.

It is first called *a dwelling*, Ex. 25 : 9; the original word may be applied to any settled abode, whether a tent or a house; and it is used of the Tabernacle because Jehovah specially manifested himself, and, as it were, abode there. This is the name applied to it throughout the present lesson. It is often called a *tent*, or *tabernacle*. It was so called from the form of the roof; in external appearance it was, in fact, a large tent. Usually when it is termed a tent, a descriptive word is employed, to show its special character; 1 K. 1 : 39 is the sole exception. It is called the *tent of meeting*, because it was the appointed meeting-place of Jehovah and his people: the Common Version unfortunately renders the phrase the *Tabernacle of the congregation*. See Ex. 25 : 22; 29 : 43–46: comp. Ex. 30 ; 6, 36; Num. 7 : 4. It is also termed the *tent of witness* or *testimony*, Num. 9 : 15; 17 : 7; 18 : 2, with reference to the Ark of the Testimony, in which were deposited the two tables of stone, the testimony of Jehovah's will and nature, Ex. 25 : 16, 21; 31 : 18. Occasionally the Tabernacle is called *a house*, Ex. 23 : 19; 34 : 26; Josh. 6 : 24; 9 : 23; Judg. 18 : 31; 20 : 18, a name designed to express the idea of Jehovah's settled habitation among his people. The word *Sanctuary* or *holy place* is applied sometimes to the whole structure, Ex. 25 : 8; Lev. 12 : 4, sometimes to the court into which none but the priests might enter, Lev. 4 : 6; Num. 3 : 28; 4 : 12, sometimes to the Holy of Holies, into which only the High Priest entered, Lev. 4 : 6. It is called again *the Temple*, 1 Sam. 1 : 9; 3 : 3; Ps. 5 : 7, as temples were supposed to be the residences of deity.

THE STRUCTURE.

The Tabernacle has been restored with great ingenuity by Fergusson, the distinguished architect; and in our description we shall follow him closely. We shall, however, translate his cubits into English terms, assuming with him that the cubit of the earlier Hebrew records is exactly eighteen and a quarter inches, or loosely eighteen inches.

The Tabernacle was placed in a large open court, which was walled in, as it were, by canvas screens, in the East called *kannauts*, and still universally used to inclose the private apartments of important personages. Those of the Tabernacle Court were seven and a half feet high, and supported by pillars of brass seven and a half feet apart, to which the curtains were attached by hooks and fillets of silver, Ex. 27 : 9 ff. This enclosure was only broken on the eastern side by the entrance, which was thirty feet wide, and vailed by curtains of fine twined linen wrought with needle-work, and of the most gorgeous colors. The space thus enclosed was a double square, seventy-five feet wide, north and south, and one hundred and fifty feet long, east and west. In the eastern half was placed the altar of burnt-offerings, described in Ex. 27 : 1–8, and between it and the Tabernacle the laver, at which the priests washed their hands and feet. In the half towards the west, was situated the Tabernacle itself, fronting towards the east, and having before it, therefore, first the laver, next the altar of burnt-offerings and next the great entrance to the outer enclosure.

The Tabernacle was an oblong structure, forty-five feet long and fifteen feet broad, Ex. 26 : 15 ff. It is probable, however, that the roof, which was pitched like the roof of an ordinary house, the two sides forming a right angle at the ridge, overhung the walls on either side seven and a half feet, so that the total width of the Tabernacle was nearly identical with that of the entrance to the outer enclosure. The gables of this roof were east and west. The walls on the north and south were formed of upright gilded boards of acacia, fifteen feet high, and the wall of the western end was formed in the same manner; at the eastern end or front there were five pillars of gilded acacia, resting on bases of brass, on which was hung by golden hooks a vail adorned with needle-work. The vail, Josephus says, came down to the middle of the pillars; and over it there was another of coarser material, to protect it from the weather; this could be drawn up with cords, so as to display the more costly one behind. The pillars both here and at the partition of the "Holy of Holies" probably helped to support the roof. Each board of the sides and the west end was finished with two tenons at its lower extremity, which fitted into massive silver bases placed on the ground, see on Ex. 40 : 18. At the top they were jointed and fastened together by bars of acacia wood run through rings of gold, Ex. 26 : 26. It required five of these bars to run the whole length of the Tabernacle; and, according to Josephus, they were gilded, and "the head of one bar ran into another after the manner of one tenon inserted into another." "For the wall behind," the western end, the same writer continues, "there was only one bar that went through all the boards, into which one of the ends of the bars on both sides was inserted."

This oblong structure was divided internally into two apartments. The Holy of Holies, into which no one but the High Priest could enter, and he but once each year, on the great Day of Atonement, Ex. 30 : 10; Lev. 16 : 2, 20, 34; Heb. 9 : 7, 8, was a cube, fifteen feet square in plan, and fifteen feet high to the top of the wall. It was separated from the front portion of the Tabernacle by four pillars of gilded acacia, on which was hung, by means of golden hooks, a vail of the richest material, most beautifully adorned. It contained the mercy-seat, surmounted by the cherubim, and on it was

placed the Ark, containing the Tables of the Law, Ex. 25 : 10-22 ; 26 : 33 ; Heb. 9 : 3-5. In front of these was the outer chamber, called the Holy Place, thirty feet long, fifteen feet high to the top of the walls, and fifteen feet wide, appropriated to the use of the priests. In it were placed the golden lamp-stand on one side, the table of show-bread opposite, and between them, in the centre, the altar of incense.

The roof of the Tabernacle was formed by four sets of curtains. The innermost set was of fine twined linen, Ex, 26 : 1 ff. ; these were ten in number, and each was six feet wide and forty-two feet long. They were of various colors, and ornamented with cherubim of "cunning work." Five of these were probably sewed together so as to form larger curtains, each thirty feet by forty-two ; and these two were joined together, when the Tabernacle was pitched, by fifty gold buckles or clasps. Above these were spread eleven curtains of goat's-hair cloth, each six feet wide by forty-five feet long ; these were also probably sewn together, six into one curtain and five in another, and joined together by fifty gold buckles, the jointure of the first curtains being thus covered by the overlapping larger section of the second. Over this was again thrown a curtain of ram's skins with the wool on, dyed red ; the dimensions of this are not specified. Still another covering of badger's skins, or as the original should perhaps be rendered, seal skins, was employed ; we do not know its dimensions, but it was probably used as a mere coping or ridge-piece to protect the junction of the two curtains of ram's skins which were laid on each slope of the roof, and probably only laced together at the top ; for if it had been designed to completely cover the ram's skins, there would seem to be no reason for their gorgeous color. Half of one of the goat's-hair strip was doubled back in front of the Tabernacle, Ex. 31 : 9, probably over the red rams' skins, and half of one strip hung down behind, Ex. 31 : 12 ; and eighteen inches were permitted to fall from the eaves on either side ; thus a fringe was formed around the roof, and an agreeable variety of colors was obtained.

ITS HISTORY.

The history of the Tabernacle begins with Ex. 25. Moses is shown the pattern of the future structure ; and all its details are impressed upon his memory, as an architect holds in his mind all the details of a complicated building which he has projected, Ex. 25 : 9. The sin of the golden calf apparently interfered with the immediate execution ; but a tent, probably that of Moses himself, was pitched without the camp, and made to serve temporarily the purpose of the Tabernacle, Ex. 33 : 7-11. The enterprise was at length resumed, Ex. 35 : 25 ; 36 : 2, 5, 6, and on the first day of the second year of the Exodus the Tabernacle was reared, Ex. 40 : 2. See on ver. 17, below.

The Tabernacle, as the place in which Jehovah dwelt, was pitched in the centre of the camp, Num. 2 : 2, as the tent of a leader always is in the East ; for Jehovah was the Captain of Israel, Josh. 5 : 14, 15. During the marches of Israel, the Tabernacle was still in the centre, Num. 2. The tribes camped and marched around it in the order of a hollow square. In certain great emergencies, it led the march, Josh. 3 : 11-16. Upon the Tabernacle abode always the cloud, dark by day and fiery red by night, Ex. 40 : 38, giving the signal for the march, Ex. 40 : 36, 37 ; Num. 9 : 17, and the halt, Num. 9 : 15-23. It was always the special meeting-place of Jehovah and his people, Num. 11 : 24, 25 ; 12 : 4 ; 14 : 10 ; 16 : 19, 42 ; 20 : 6 ; 27 : 2 ; Deut. 31 : 14. W. L. ALEXANDER : "So long as the Israelites were in the wilderness, the Tabernacle formed the central point of their encampment. Around it were grouped the tribes according to a fixed order, Num. 2 : 2. From it came the indication which determined whether the host was to rest or to march. So long as the glory of the Lord rested on it, the people knew that they had to remain where they were, but when that arose from it, they knew that the signal for their removing was given, Ex. 40 : 36, 37 ; Num. 4 : 6-15. On important occasions the congregation of the people was assembled before the entrance of the Tabernacle enclosure ; and by 'all the congregation,' we are not to understand the whole two millions of Israel, or the six hundred thousand warriors, but the elders and other representatives of the nation ; comp. Ex. 3 : 15 and 16 ; 12 : 3 and 28 ; 19 : 7 and 8 ; 28 : 18 and 19 and Deut. 5 : 23, 24 ; Deut. 31 : 28 and 30. During the conquest of Canaan the Tabernacle, at first moved from place to place, Josh. 4 : 19 ; 8 : 30-35 ; 9 : 6 ; 10 : 15, was finally located at Shiloh, Josh. 9 : 27 ; 18 : 1. Here it remained during the time of the Judges till it was captured by the Philistines, who carried off the sacred Ark of the Covenant, 1 Sam. 4 : 22. From this time forward the glory of the Tabernacle was gone. When the Ark was recovered it was no longer placed in the Tabernacle, though the latter seems still to have been regarded with veneration by the people, and to have retained the services of the priests, comp. 1 Sam. 21 : 1-6 ; 23 : 4-6 ; 1 Chron. 16 : 13. Even after the Ark was removed to Jerusalem and placed in a new Tabernacle, 2 Sam. 6 : 17 ; 1 Chron. 15 : 1 ; 16 : 4, 37, the old structure still had its hold on the veneration of the community, and the old altar still received their offerings, 1 Chron. 16 : 39 ; 21 : 29. It was not till the Temple was built, and a fitting house thus prepared for the Lord, that the ancient Tabernacle was allowed to perish and be forgotten." The Ark was placed in the Temple ; the golden altar, the table of show-bread, and the golden lamp-stand were renewed by Solomon, as afterwards by Zerubbabel, and lastly by the Maccabees. The Ark was carried away at the Babylonish captivity, 2 Chron. 35 : 3 ; Jer. 3 : 16. It was not renewed by Zerubbabel or Herod ; the Most Holy Place was left empty.

THE TABERNACLE AND THE EGYPTIAN TEMPLE.

It should create no surprise that the Tabernacle resembled somewhat the temples of Egypt, which had like it, (1) an inner sanctuary, mysterious and specially holy, (2) altars for sacrifice and offering, (3) sacred cakes or show bread, (4) incense, (5) priests, who accomplished their ministrations barefooted and in white, (6) sacred arks, (7) cherubim, (8) and urim and thummim. It is the manner of God to take the common and make it sacred, to ally his cause with our ordinary customs and interests, to turn the waters of this life into the wine of a higher life. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, a wisdom taught chiefly by the priests; he was familiar with the Egyptian ritual, as also, to a less extent, were his people; and God permitted him to take such features of the Egyptian temples as were innocent and adapted to the condition of the Israelites, and interweave them with the holier worship of the Tabernacle. This was wise, as it is always wise in cultivating a tree to trim away merely the superfluous or diseased branches, and even if a better kind is desired, to engraft it on the stock already vigorous: and to infer from the wise resemblances of the Tabernacle to the Egyptian temples that it was the mere product of Moses' unaided mind, and that the pattern could not have come from God, is to say that Moses could plan for his people with great wisdom, while God could not. The differences between the Tabernacle and the Egyptian temples were far more striking than these analogies: 1. The Tabernacle was devoted to the One only God; the Egyptian temples recognized many. 2. The most sacred things of the Tabernacle, such as the Ark, the Tables of the Law, the Cherubim, the mercy-seat, etc., were placed in the Holy of Holies, where the people could never see them; in the Egyptian temple objects of similar importance were placed before the people to excite idolatrous adoration. 3. Where the object in the Tabernacle resembled that of the Egyptian temple, the meaning attached to it was higher and holier: the Ark was the depository of a real revelation; the show-bread was the symbol of communion with God; the sacrifice pointed to the sin of him who made it, and to the mercy of God toward the penitent; and all pointed forward to some great provision for man, as yet mysterious, to be revealed in the future. These differences distinguish the Tabernacle as the direct appointment of God; and it is upon these that the devout mind should chiefly dwell.

THE SYMBOLRY OF THE TABERNACLE.

1. As there is but one God, so Israel had but one Tabernacle. 2. The structure itself was a symbol of God's abode with man in the Old Dispensation, Ex. 25:8; 29:45; and in the person of Christ, John 1:14, Revised New Testament; Rev. 21:5; see also under the heads of *Names* and *History*. 3. The Holy of Holies represented the more special residence of Jehovah, or heaven itself, Heb. 8:2; 9:11; and contained the symbols of his most awful and most gracious attributes. 4. The Holy Place, before the Holy of Holies, is used as a symbol of our Lord's human nature, in which Deity dwelt on earth, and in which Deity still ministers for us in heaven, Heb. 8·2; 9:11; 10:20. By an extension of the figure, the body of Christ is represented in the vail which divided the two apartments, Heb. 10:20, and through which, when it was parted, the High-priest entered the Holy of Holies, as Christ entered into the presence of God through his flesh at his death. 5. As the High-priest could not enter the Holy of Holies without the blood of atonement, so we cannot enter heaven without the blood of Christ, Heb. 9:11-14. 6. The vail was the symbol not only of Christ's humanity, but of separation between God and man, a separation terminated only by the blood of Christ; hence the people were not permitted to pass behind it, for Christ was not yet come, Heb. 9:7-12. Hence, also, that which corresponded to it in the Temple was rent at the death of Christ; for his flesh, which, as we have seen, it represented, was open to his soul, and his death destroyed the separation of God and man. 7. The Tables of the Law were put into the Ark of the Testimony, as a testimony against the sins of the people, Deut. 31:26, 27, and as an expression of divine justice. 8. But this Testimony was hidden by the mercy-seat, Ex. 15:21, on which the blood of atonement was sprinkled by the High-priest when he entered the Holy of Holies; for God's mercy covers and, as it were, hides his justice when he is approached through the atonement of Christ. 9. It is thus seen that the High-priest was in a peculiar sense a representative of Christ, Heb. 9. 10. In the Holy Place, the less sacred apartment, was (1) the altar of incense, the incense representing prayer, Ps. 141:2; Luke 1:10; Rev. 5:8; 8:3; (2) the table of show-bread, consecrated with incense, Lev. 24:7, representing communion with God in prayer, and the hospitality of God to our prayers, Lev. 24:9; (3) the golden lamp-stand, the symbol of God's people who thus commune with him in prayer; the gold of which it was formed denoted their preciousness in God's sight, and their heavenly nature, and its oil, the Holy Spirit, by which their life is fed: there was only one lamp-stand, denoting the unity of God's people; but it had various branches and lamps, denoting their multiplicity in unity; and the number was seven, the symbol of their completeness. 11. Before the Tabernacle, in the court, stood (1) the altar of burnt-offering, on which were burned the sacrifices of the people; for none may approach God without the sacrifice of Christ; and (2) the laver in which the priests cleansed their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle; for purity becomes those who approach God. Thus was set forth the double need of the soul, of justification through the blood of Christ, and also sanctification or moral excellence.

17 AND it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first of the month, the dwelling was set up.
18 And Moses set up the dwelling: and he put down its

V. 17. *Dwelling;* this is the direct, sufficient, and self-interpreting equivalent of the Hebrew word. Being a familiar designation of the habitation of men, it is exactly suited to express the conception of Jehovah's mansion, in accordance with his promise, that he would "*dwell* among his people, and be their God." See, especially, ch. 25 : 8, 9, reading "dwelling" instead of "tabernacle" in vers. 9; 29 : 45; 40 : 35, "because the cloud *dwelt* thereon." The structure thus named was only in part of the nature of a tent, namely, in respect to its ceiling and roof, and in the latter view is everywhere called, distinctly, a tent.

17. **The first month.** The month Abib, afterwards called Nisan, in which the Exodus took place, and which on that account was made the first of the year, Ex. 12 : 2.

The second year. Counting from the first of Nisan, of the year preceding.

The first of the month. The first of Nisan. The Exodus had taken place on the fourteenth of the same month in the preceding year, so that one year lacking fourteen days had passed since that event. Rev. S. CLARK: "They had been nearly three months in reaching the foot of Mount Sinai, Ex. 19 : 1; Moses had spent eighty days on the mountain, Ex. 24 : 18; 34 : 28; and some time must be allowed for what is related in Ex. 24, as well as for the interval between the two periods which Moses spent in the mountain, Ex. 33 : 1-23. The construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture would thus appear to have occupied something less than half a year. Bleek's objection to this period as too short for the completion of such a work, is worth nothing, if we duly consider the interest which the whole people must have felt in it, and the nature of the structure, so unlike one of solid masonry."

The dwelling. The place where God chose to dwell. The word refers to the structure, forty-five feet long and fifteen feet broad, Ex. 26 : 15 ff., usually known to us as the Tabernacle; and not to the court, an inclosure one hundred and fifty feet long and seventy-five feet wide, in which it was placed. The erection of this court is described in ver. 33. See the marginal note of Dr. Bliss above.

Was set up. In the plain before Mount Sinai. The separate parts of the structure had been completed, and the work of the day consisted in putting them together and beginning their consecrated use. Explicit directions concerning the erection of the dwelling were given to Moses during the first forty days which he spent in the mountain, before the apostasy of the people, Ex. chs. 25-31. The breach of the covenant which subsequently occurred occasioned the postponement of the enterprise. After the penitence of the Israelites and the renewal of the covenant it was resumed. We have two accounts of the structure; one contains the divine directions concerning it, and the other is a careful history showing that those directions were fulfilled in every detail. The only considerable difference between them is in reference to the order in which the various parts are named. In the ideal sketch furnished by Jehovah the Ark of the Testimony is described before the building which was to receive it, Ex. 25 : 10-16, for it was the object of chief importance; but the dwelling, as its receptacle, was naturally constructed first, Ex. 36 : 8-37 : 5. Were the Book of Exodus a romance the symbolical importance of the Ark would be recognized equally in both places. The materials were freely contributed by the people, who seemed anxious to testify their renewed allegiance to Jehovah by their liberality, Ex. 36 : 5-7. The amount of gold may be roughly estimated at $876,000, and the silver at $200,000. This will not appear too large a sum for a nation of four millions to contribute, when we consider the fondness of all orientals for the precious metals, and their well-known disposition to hoard coins and jewels,—traits which reached their extreme development in the Israelitish character,—the liberality with which they had been dismissed from Egypt, Ex. 12 : 35, 36, and the interest of the forgiven people in the erection of a structure which was to ensure the presence of Jehovah among them. The contributions of the Israelites seem insignificant in contrast with the enormous sums which have been collected in the East even in recent times.

18. **Sockets.** Bases. They were of silver, Ex. 26 : 19. Each one was a massive block; it weighed a talent, or about 94 pounds avoirdupois; and as there were a hundred in all, a hundred talents of silver were used in casting them, Ex. 38 : 27. They absorbed by far the larger part of the silver contributed by the people. Forty were placed on each side, and twenty at the western or rear end, the eastern end or front being left open. They were to the dwelling of Jehovah what foundation stones are to an ordinary building. Rev. S. CLARK: "Nothing is said of the form; but as the tenons of the boards were 'set in order one against another,' Ex. 26 : 17, the bases may have fitted together so as to make a continuous foundation for the walls of boards, presenting a succession of mortices, each base having

sockets, and placed its boards, and put in its bars, and
19 set up its pillars, and spread the tent over the dwelling,
and placed the covering over it, above; as Jehovah com-
manded Moses.
20 And he took the testimony and put it into the ark, and

a single mortice, into which the tenons were to fit. This seems to have been the notion of Philo and Josephus. The bases served not only for ornament, but also for a protection of the lower ends of the boards from the decay which would have resulted from contact with the ground." The foundation of the building was thus sufficiently weighty to keep it firm.

Boards. These were probably mere planks of sufficient thickness to form steady walls. The later Rabbins say that they were a cubit or 18 inches thick; but Josephus, a better authority, says that they were four fingers, or one hand in thickness. Each board was ten cubits or fifteen feet high and a cubit and a half or twenty-seven inches wide, Ex. 26: 16; so that there were twenty on each side of the building. They were of acacia, the shittim of the Common Version, and overlaid with gold. There appear to have been tenons on the lower corners of each board, so that when the boards were arranged in position side by side the two adjoining tenons of adjoining boards seemed as one, Ex. 26: 17, and fitted into the one mortice in the middle of the massive silver base, the boards and the bases thus breaking joints, Ex. 26: 19-25.

Its bars. These were of acacia, and overlaid with gold. There were five short bars on each side. They were fitted into broad rings of gold, which projected from the boards probably near the top of the Tabernacle, and together they seem to have formed a continuous line of bars, the ends being so constructed with mortice and tenon as to fit together. It is not stated whether they were placed on the outside or the inside of the wall; but from the rich materials of the rings and bars it is inferred that they were placed within, and constituted not only a means of bracing the walls, but an ornament; it is supposed that if placed within, they would contribute more to the firmness of the structure than if placed without. Each of the rings of the corner boards was so shaped as to receive the ends of two bars, one belonging to the back and the other to the sides, uniting at right angles. Besides these five bars thus jointed together to form one, breaking joints with the boards, there was a continuous bar which ran the whole length of the side, "from end to end," "in the midst of the board." It probably passed through another row of broad golden rings, half way between the bottom and the top, thus adding greatly to the strength of the walls.

Pillars. These also were of acacia-wood, and overlaid with gold. There were five. They were not architecturally connected with the walls of the Tabernacle; but they were placed in front, for the purpose of sustaining the movable curtain which was placed before the entrance. They probably also served to support the front end of the tent-roof, which here projected beyond the walls of the Tabernacle, forming a sort of porch. They had capitols overlaid with silver; and they were connected with silver curtain-rods to which the hangings were attached. The hangings were also attached directly to the pillars with golden hooks projecting from the capitols. They were placed in massive bases of bronze, Ex. 26: 37, not of silver, to mark the inferiority of the porch to the more concealed portions of the dwelling. It is probable that there were similar supports for the tent-covering in the rear, which, as they were not visible, are not mentioned; and that the four pillars for the vail of the Most Holy Place served a similar purpose.

19. **The tent.** See the description of the roof in the preceding essay; and also the marginal notes of Dr. Bliss on vers. 17 and 22.

The covering. There were three thicknesses to the roof. The words of the text refer to the external covering of skins. See the preceding essay.

As Jehovah commanded Moses. The great care of Moses to carry out minutely the commands of Jehovah needed to be thus recorded for our attention and imitation.

20. **The testimony.** Rev. S. CLARK: "The tables of stone, with the Ten Commandments engraved on them; see Ex. 25: 16; 31: 18. Nothing else is said to have been put into the Ark. These were found there by themselves in the time of Solomon, 1 K. 8: 9; 2 Chron. 5: 10. The Pot of Manna was 'laid up before the Testimony,' Ex. 16: 34; Aaron's rod was also placed 'before the Testimony,' Num. 17: 10; and the Book of the Law was put at 'the side of the Ark,' Deut. 31: 26. The expression 'before the testimony,' appears to mean the space immediately in front of the Ark. Most interpreters hold that the Pot of Manna and Aaron's rod were placed between the Ark and the vail. It is said, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Ark contained 'the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant,' 9: 4. From this statement, and from the mode of expression in Kings and Chronicles, which appears to indicate that the fact of the Ark's con-

placed the poles on the ark, and placed the mercy-seat

V. 20. "Cover," or "lid," must be allowed as a reading alternative to "mercy-seat." Indeed, the lexicographers and most of the recent translators so render the Hebrew word. That is derived from a verb signifying originally "to cover," but from a form of the verb which is exclusively used in the secondary sense of "to cover" sin, *i. e.*, by expiation or atonement. Thus even the etymology would rather favor a meaning for the noun in which the idea of expiation should be involved. And when we consider the peculiar preciousness of the tablet on the ark, made of solid gold, and the solemnity of its form, of which the cherubim were an essential part, together with the fact that on the great day of atonement the high-priest was to sprinkle blood "upon," and before, this tablet (Lev. 16 : 14), we find much reason to believe, that from the first the Hebrew word was understood to express not merely "a cover,"—but also a propitiation. So, at all events, the Jews early came to think of it, for the Septuagint renders it, first, "a propitiatory lid," and afterward, "the propitiatory."

It will thus be seen, that while "cover" is not an adequate rendering here, the term "mercy-seat," although hallowed to our minds, does not so properly convey the real sense as could be desired. There is no suggestion of "seat" in the Hebrew word itself, nor in the designed uses of the object named; and "mercy" is only remotely implied, as the expected result of atonement. The old English equivalent, "a propitiatory," is perhaps the best word available, but no change seems to be required at present.

taining nothing at that time but the Tables was unexpected, it would seem that the other articles were at some period put within the Ark; and this accords with some rabbinical traditions. It is very probable that the pot and the rod had been put into the Ark before it was taken by the Philistines, but that they were not sent back with the Ark and the Tables; 1 Sam. 4 : 11; 6 : 11."

The ark. The original word means a box or coffer, Gen. 50 : 26; 2 K. 12 : 9, 10; 2 Chron. 24 : 8. Another term is employed with reference to the ark of Noah and that of Moses. Estimating the cubit at eighteen inches, the Ark of the Testimony was a box three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide and two feet three inches in depth. It was made of acacia wood, and was overlaid within and without with pure gold. The top was surrounded with a crown-like border of gold. It was the chief point of interest in the sanctuary. On its contents see the preceding note. It supported the mercy-seat where were the cherubim from between which God communed with his people, Ex. 25 : 22. Because it contained the Tables of the Law, or the Testimony, it is most frequently termed in Exodus the Ark of the Testimony. Later, when the Tables were more distinctly understood to contain the terms of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, it was usually termed the Ark of the Covenant. Its other names are of less frequent occurrence. See on Ex. 16 : 33, 34.

Poles. The bars by means of which the Ark was carried. They were of acacia-wood, overlaid with gold. It is probable that the Ark had feet under the four corners; and in these were placed golden rings, into which the staves were fixed; and it was ordered that when once in position they should not be removed, a direction which was given in order that the Ark might not be touched with the hands, 2 Sam. 6 : 6. When carried, it was thus elevated above the shoulders of its bearers, Ex. 25 : 10–15.

On the Ark. That is, on its sides, in the rings which projected from the feet.

The mercy-seat. See the marginal note of Dr. Bliss above. The mercy-seat was a plate of pure gold, probably of the same dimensions with the top of the Ark, of which it seems to have served as a cover. Upon it arose two cherubim, probably human figures with wings; one stood at either end, their faces turned towards each other, gazing down upon the mercy-seat; and their wings stretched forward and upward so as to form a sort of arched canopy over the space beneath, Ex. 25 : 18–20. They must have been small, corresponding to the area of the mercy-seat. The mercy-seat and the cherubim seem to have been beaten out of one solid piece of gold, Ex. 25 : 17–20. The actual cherubim are living angelic creatures, Gen. 3 : 24, who perform various offices. (1) They guard that which is sacred and unapproachable, Gen. 3 : 24; Ezek. 28 : 14–16; (2) they attend the presence of Jehovah as a convoy of grandeur, 2 Sam. 22 : 2; Ps. 18 : 10; (3) they surround the throne of God and contemplate with holy reverence the manifestations of deity; and this seems to be in part the occupation of the winged figures upon the mercy-seat. We know not the true forms of these beings; hence various representations of them are employed in the Scriptures; they are figured as combining various animal shapes, the ox, the lion, and the eagle being prominent in these composite forms, or as winged men, like those of the mercy-seat. The animal features of these composite forms represent those powers of the cherubim in which they are supposed to excel us, the eagle their swiftness, the lion their strength, the ox their gentleness and utility. The human form, which was sometimes represented alone, and sometimes combined with the others, represented their intelligence and spirituality. The human figure of those upon the mercy-seat represented the highest forms of created existence surrounding the throne of God

21 on the ark, above, and brought the ark into the dwelling, and placed the vail of the covering before it, and covered over the ark of the testimony; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the meeting-tent, on the north

V. 22. *Meeting-tent:* so the whole sanctuary, including the "dwelling," and with particular reference to its tent-like roof, is often called; not merely, nor even principally, as the place of gathering for the congregation, but above all as the place where God would meet his people, and manifest himself to them. This design of the sanctuary is plainly indicated in ch. 29 : 42–46. See also ch. 30 : 36; Num. 17 : 4.

and engaged in devout admiration of the justice and mercy by which it is distinguished, the justice presented symbolically in the tables of the law, the mercy in the mercy-seat itself which arose above the law, triumphing over it in the forgiveness of the sins which it condemned.

The mercy-seat was the symbol of the divine mercy procured by the blood of atonement, the witness that God's throne, to those who approach it aright, is a throne of mercy; for it was from this that he communicated his will to Moses, Ex. 25 : 22; Lev. 1 : 1. His place was between the cherubim, who were the adoring witnesses of his condescension. The cherubim that were placed at the garden of Eden were the executors of his justice; these represented the gentler quality of his government.

21. **Into the dwelling.** Into that part of it which was called the Holy of Holies, at the western end.

The vail. The Hebrew means literally *the separation.* The vail was the gorgeous hanging, ornamented with many colors and with cherubim, Ex. 26 : 31, 32, which separated the Holy of Holies from the other and larger apartment; it depended from golden hooks inserted in four gilded pillars. The pillars at the entrance of the Tabernacle stood in massive bases of bronze; but these in bases of solid silver, to denote their greater importance as connected with the Holy of Holies. It was the vail of Herod's temple which corresponded to this of the text that was rent at the death of Christ. It was the dread symbol of that separation between God and man, between earth and heaven, which sin has produced; and its destruction at the death of our Saviour represented the accessibility of God through the blood of atonement.

And covered over the Ark. The office of the vail was to conceal the Ark with the mercy-seat, which was symbolically the special throne of Jehovah. The expression *covered over* is used poetically with reference to this office; not that the vail was above that which it is said to have covered.

As Jehovah commanded Moses. All this symbolry, so prophetic of the atonement through Christ, could not have been the invention of man; it must have come from that God who had planned the redemption to which it pointed.

22. **The table.** Of show-bread. It was two cubits, or three feet long, a cubit, or a foot and a half wide, a cubit and a half or twenty-seven inches high. It was of acacia wood and was overlaid with gold. A golden moulding or cornice was placed around the top; and a gilt framing, half way between the top and the bottom, connected and braced the legs. Golden rings were attached to the feet; and through these bars were inserted, so that when borne on the shoulders of its carriers the table arose above their heads. On it were placed various golden vessels with drink-offerings in them, and, most important of all, twelve large cakes of unleavened bread, one for each tribe, arranged in two piles, with a golden cup of frankincense, the symbol of prayer, on each pile. The table, with its bread and wine, denoted the communion of the covenant people with God in prayer, and his hospitality to prayer. It was to stand before Jehovah perpetually, in token of his perpetual grace to those who seek him. The bread and wine and incense were renewed every Sabbath day, the day devoted to special communion with God; the bread and wine when renewed were given to the priests, Jehovah's ministers, and the frankincense seems to have been lighted upon the altar, from which it ascended to heaven in flame, Lev. 2 : 2.

This table, together with the other utensils of the Tabernacle, were probably lost long before the advent of Christ; but copies of them, probably nearly exact as to form and size, were made for the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. The table of show-bread, the golden chandelier, and some articles of minor importance, from Herod's temple, were carried to Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem; they were exhibited as trophies by Titus; and they were represented in bas-relief on the interior of his triumphal arch, where the sculptures still remain, though now in a ruinous condi-

side of the dwelling, outside of the vail; and set bread in order thereon, before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

And he placed the chandelier in the meeting-tent, opposite to the table, on the south side of the dwelling, and put up the lights before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

And he placed the golden altar in the meeting-tent, be-

V. 24. *Chandelier;* this was not a "candlestick," but a stand for seven lamps.

tion. They were copied and explained by Reland, in 1710, when they were in a better state; and they constitute evidence of the highest importance in reference to the furniture of the Tabernacle.

The meeting-tent. See the marginal note of Dr. BLISS on the word. The dwelling of Jehovah is called the tent of meeting for the same reason that the tent of Moses gained the name, because it was the meeting-place of Jehovah with his worshippers. The rendering of the Common Version, *the tent of the congregation*, quite misses the point.

The north side. On the right, as the priest entered.

Outside of the vail. Immediately outside the vail which concealed the Holy of Holies. See on ver. 21.

23. **He set bread in order.** See the note on the table of show-bread, ver. 23.

Before Jehovah. Just in front of the Holy of Holies, the symbol of Jehovah's residence, where he specially manifested himself.

24. **The chandelier.** See the marginal note of Dr. BLISS. This chandelier was of the most costly material and the most beautiful form. It had seven branches; and the top of each was a level surface on which a lamp was placed, Ex. 25 : 37. It was of pure gold. Its size is not mentioned; but knowing the size of the table of show-bread, and assuming what is altogether probable, that the two objects on the arch of Titus are figured on the same scale, it must have been about three feet high, and two feet wide at the extremities of the external branches. There are ancient representations of it on gems, in tombs, and on the walls of synagogues. Capt. Willson has recently discovered one in a ruined synagogue in the valley of the Jarmuk. In most of these it is supported by a base representing three feet or claws, differing, thus, from the bas-relief on the arch of Titus, which has a base figured with fabulous animals, such as the Jews would not be apt to permit upon their sacred utensils. RELAND conjectures that the original foot may have been broken off and lost or stolen in the confusion attending the removal of the spoils from the Temple, and supplied conjecturally by the artist who decorated the arch. The chandelier is described in detail in Ex. 25 : 31–40. A straight stem arose from the base. From each side of it shot three branches curving upward in three parallel lines, so that the lamps on the extremities formed a single row. The branches were highly ornamented. Rev. S. CLARK: "It would seem from Ex. 25 : 33–35, that the ornamentation consisted of uniform members, each comprising a series of an almond flower, a knob, and a lily; that the stem comprised four of these members; that each pair of branches was united to the stem of one of the knobs; and that each branch comprised three members." The figure upon the arch of Titus agrees with the main features of this description; there is first a knob, then a lily growing out of it, then an almond flower growing out of the lily, then a knob resting in the cup of the almond flower; and thus the branch is built up. For the symbolic meaning of the chandelier see the last paragraph of the essay prefixed to this lesson.

Opposite the table. On the opposite side of the room, and just before the vail, but so that the line of lamps ran parallel with the side wall of the building, Ex. 25 : 37.

25. **Put up the lights.** The lamps, of which there were seven. He put up one on each branch of the chandelier. They were movable, and probably similar to those used by the Egyptians and other nations, small covered vessels, with a mouth at one end for the wick.

As Jehovah commanded Moses. Moses was probably assisted by Aaron in performing the priestly functions of arranging the bread upon the table, lighting the lamps, burning sweet incense, etc.; see ver. 31. As there was as yet no national priesthood, Moses acted thus by divine command. After the consecration of Aaron and his sons, he gave these duties wholly into their charge.

26. **The golden altar.** This was a casing of boards of acacia wood, completely overlaid with

27 fore the vail, and burnt thereon incense of spices; as Je-
hovah commanded Moses.

28 29 And he placed the door-covering for the dwelling; and the altar of burnt-offering he placed at the door of the dwelling of the meeting-tent, and offered up thereon the burnt-offering, and the oblation; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

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gold. It was eighteen inches square and three feet high. It had projections like horns ascending from the four corners of the upper surface. A golden moulding or cornice ran around the top. On each of two opposite sides, and immediately below the moulding, was a golden ring, for the reception of the bar by which it was to be borne.

The meeting-tent. See on ver. 22.

Before the vail. In the centre, between the chandelier and the table of shew-bread; for it was more important than either, and was the link connecting the two. See the next note.

27. **Incense of spices.** Its composition is described in Ex. 30 : 34–36. It was considered so sacred that no imitation of it was permitted, Ex. 30 : 37. It was to be burned upon the altar every morning and every evening, and no other incense than this was to be offered upon the altar of incense; nor was any burnt sacrifice to be made upon it. The incense was the symbol of prayer, Ps. 141 : 2; Rev. 5 : 8; 8 : 3, 4. The altar denoted the heart from which prayer ascends. With its perpetual incense it was placed immediately before the vail, which concealed the mercy-seat; for it is through prayer that we obtain mercy. It was also between the chandelier, which was the symbol of the holy people, and the table of show-bread, the symbol of divine blessing and hospitality; for prayer brings the soul into communion with God, and claims his blessing. The incense was to be offered perpetually, denoting the need of continual prayer. Once in the year the High-priest made atonement upon the altar by touching its horns with the blood of the sacrifice, Ex. 30 : 10; Lev. 16 : 18, 19; for the heart of man needs the atonement of Christ in order that its prayers may be accepted. See Ex. 30 : 1–10.

28. **The door-covering.** This was made of gorgeous colors, and was ornamented with needle-work. It hung from the five pillars which stood at the entrance of the dwelling; see Ex. 26 : 36, 37.

29. **The altar of burnt-offering.** So called because upon it were consumed the whole burnt offerings, see on Ex. 32 : 6, and all those parts of other sacrifices which were offered by fire to Jehovah. It was also termed the *brazen altar*, from the material with which it was covered, and to distinguish it from the golden altar of incense; see on vers. 26, 27. It was light and comparatively small like all the furniture of the holy dwelling, so as to be portable. It was square, each side being five cubits or seven and a half feet long; and it was three cubits or four and a half feet in height. It was made of planks of acacia, and was overlaid with brass. It was hollow, Ex. 27 : 8; and it is thought that when the people rested so that the Tabernacle was pitched, the interior was filled with earth, on which the fire and the victim were placed, Ex. 20 : 24. At the four corners of the top arose four horns of acacia overlaid with brass; it is probable that the victim was bound to these when about to be sacrificed, Ps. 118 : 27; they were touched with the blood of the sin-offering, Ex. 29 : 12; Lev. 4 : 7; 8 : 15; 9 : 9; 16 : 18; and to lay hold of them was the mode in which a fugitive from violence claimed the right of sanctuary, Ex. 21 : 14; 1 K. 1 : 50. Round the altar, midway between the top and the bottom, ran a projecting ledge; this was supported by a grating which fell to the earth, so that the base of the altar seemed larger than the top; and at the four corners of this net-work were fastened the rings for the bars on which the whole was borne. The priests were not permitted to ascend the altar by steps; and it is conjectured that a slope of earth led up, like an inclined plane, on the south side; on the east was the place of ashes; at the west, near by, the brazen basin or laver at which the priests washed, ver. 30; and on the north the victim appears to have been slain, Lev. 1 : 11. The corresponding altar before the Temple was greatly larger; that of Solomon's Temple was thirty feet square and fifteen feet high; and that of Herod's Temple was seventy-five feet square and twenty-two and a half feet high. The significance of the altar of burnt-offering is apparent; on it were offered all those sacrifices which pointed to the one sacrifice on Calvary, in which the Mosaic ritual had its fulfilment and its end. It is fully described dwelling, in Ex. 27 : 1–8.

At the door. In the open air, in front of the entrance; but at some distance from the sacred to make room for the basin or laver, ver. 30.

The burnt-offering. See on Ex. 32 : 6; and Lev. 7 : 37.

30 And he placed the basin between the meeting-tent and the altar, and put water there to wash.

The oblation. Usually called in English the meat-offering. The original term meant at first a gift of any kind, and specially a gift from an inferior to a superior, Gen. 32 : 13; 43 : 11; 2 Sam. 8 : 2, 6; Gen. 4 : 3-5. It was by gradual use attached in a special sense to the unbloody offering, as distinguished from the bloody sacrifices of the law, because this was regarded as an acknowledgment that all the substance of the offerer belonged to Jehovah; see the marginal note of Dr. Bliss on Lev. 7 : 37. The oblation was composed of fine flour, mixed with oil and frankincense, and seasoned with salt, but without leaven or honey; see on Lev. 7 : 37. It was usually accompanied by a drink-offering of wine, the symbol of grateful joy, 10 : 15. A part of it was offered on the golden altar of incense; the rest belonged to the priest. The oblation presented by the priest, however, was wholly burnt. The oblation did not clearly present the idea of atonement for sin; hence probably it was usually preceded by the burnt-offering or the peace-offering, which were in turn preceded by the sin-offering, Lev. 8; for in the order of grace we first confess our sins, secure the pardoning mercy of God in Christ, and dedicate ourselves to the divine service; and then the dedication of our property naturally follows. Hence the oblation was presented in connection with most of the other offerings, which supplemented its meaning by pointing more directly to sin and the Saviour, Ex. 29 : 10, 41; Num. 28 : 9-14, 20, 28; 29 : 3, 4, 14, 15; 19 : 9, 10; Ex. 29 : 1, 2; Lev. 6 : 20; 7 : 2; Num. 8 : 8; Lev. 14 : 20; Num. 6 : 15.

30. **The basin.** This was a vessel of brass containing water for the priests to wash their hands and feet. It was made from the brazen mirrors which the Hebrew women contributed for the purpose, Ex. 38 : 8. We are ignorant of its size and form; but it is conjectured that, like the other utensils of the Tabernacle, it was so small as to be easily portable, and that it was round.

Between the meeting-tent . . . . and the altar. See on ver. 29, *by the door*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. We should give largely in order to secure the erection of houses of public worship; on ver. 1, last paragraph.

2. The house of God should be made attractive in its form, its colors, and its appointments, vers. 17-30.

3. The Old Testament and the New are one; both point to Christ, vers. 17-30.

4. God delights to dwell with men, vers. 17-30.

5. An interesting Sabbath-school sermon upon the Christian life might be derived from the objects enumerated in the lesson, taking them in the reverse order of their enumeration. Only hints are here given; the teacher who has studied the essay and notes will be able to expand them, and to add many other points: (1) The brazen altar and its bloody sacrifices. We must approach God and find peace through the sacrifice of Christ. (2) The chandelier. The Christian graces are fed by the Holy Spirit in order that we may let our light shine. (3) The golden altar. The duty of perpetual prayer. (4) The table of show-bread. God's delight in receiving and answering the prayers of his people. (5) The vail which separates the sinner from God is rent by Christ, so that we have access to the throne of grace. (6) The throne of God is a mercy-seat to those who approach it in the appointed way. Angels gaze with adoration upon a Being whose nature is utterly just, whose law is utterly pure, and whose reign is one of forgiving grace to those who seek him through the blood of atonement with the prayer of faith. (7) The testimony. The law is still the expression of the divine will; but those who have broken it, and sincerely repent, may behold it covered by the mercy-seat.

LESSON XVIII.—THE FIVE OFFERINGS. LEV. 7: 37-38.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

The present lesson, and that which follows, are taken from the Book of Leviticus. This book is logically connected with that which immediately precedes it. When the Tabernacle had been erected in the plain before Sinai, an event described in the last chapter of Exodus, Jehovah spoke from the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies, as he had promised, Ex. 25 : 22, and communicated the ceremonial and civil laws which constitute such a large portion of Leviticus, Lev. 1 : 1. Moreover, in the words of the Rev. S. CLARK, "while the directions for the consecration of priests are given in Exodus, the consecration itself is narrated in Leviticus in nearly the same words, changing the tense of the verbs." The Book of Leviticus is also logically connected with that of Numbers, which immediately succeeds it; the laws by which the nation was to be governed having been published by the voice of God, and

37 THIS is the law for the burnt-offering, for the oblation,

V. 37. *Oblation:* so we uniformly render the Hebrew word, which signifies generally "present," or "donation." *Meat*-offering, as the term would now be understood, is specially inappropriate to its technical import in the system of sacrifices, since flesh formed no part of its material.

recorded by the pen of Moses, the command was issued to prepare for the march, which began shortly afterwards, Num. 10 : 11.

THE ORIGIN OF SACRIFICE.

We are ignorant of the origin of sacrifice. But the existence of the institution among the children of Adam soon after the promise of the Messiah, Gen. 3 : 15 ; 4 : 3, 4, its fitness as the symbol of a guilt deserving death and of a substitute for the sinner, and its wide extension among all nations, forbid the conclusion that it was the invention of man, and lead to the conviction that it had its inception in a primitive revelation, whose existence is demonstrated by the many strange hints and fragments of truths preserved in the traditions of the heathen. The sin-offering, however, the most clear and sublime foreshadowing of Christianity, was probably unknown before the erection of the Tabernacle ; see on Ex. 32 : 6, and on Lev. 7 : 37.

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM OF THE HEBREWS.

The five offerings mentioned in the text were all that were known to the Mosaic law. Each kind of offering, however, embraced several minor classes, according to the condition of the offerer, whether he were rich or poor, a civil officer or a private citizen, a priest or a layman ; according to the special occasion of the service, whether public or private ; and in some cases, where atonement was made, according to the peculiarity of the offence. The idea of expiation ran through most of the sacrifices, yet we may ideally classify them according to its prominence, or its comparative abeyance : 1. The sin-offering ; purely expiatory. 2. The trespass-offering ; expiatory, with reparation of injuries. 3. The burnt-offering ; self-dedicatory. 4. The peace-offering ; the token of communion with a God reconciled by the blood of atonement invoked by the repentant sinner. 5. The oblation, the only unbloody offering of the series ; dedicatory of the property.

37. **This.** Namely the whole passage, Lev. chs. 1–7, of which the verses of the lesson are but the formal conclusion. Before proceeding to treat of other topics, Moses presents a summary of the section which he thus brings to a close.

The burnt-offering. The original word is usually applied to the whole burnt-offering ; but sometimes refers to other sacrifices, since a part of them was consumed in the fire. It is here employed in the former sense. See on Ex. 32 : 6. In addition to the note there, the following observations should be carefully studied : 1. Rev. Alfred BARRY : "There were as public burnt-offerings : (1) The daily burnt-offering, a lamb of the first year, sacrificed every morning and evening for the people, Ex. 29 : 38–42 ; Num. 28 : 3–8. (2) The Sabbath burnt-offering, double of that which was offered every day, Num. 28 : 9, 10. (3) The offering at the new moon, the three great festivals, the great day of atonement, and the feast of trumpets ; generally two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs. See Num. 28 : 11–29, 39. Private burnt-offerings were appointed at the consecration of priests, Ex. 29 : 15 ; Lev. 8 : 18 ; 9 : 12 ; at the purification of women, Lev. 12 : 6–8 ; at the cleansing of lepers, Lev. 14 : 19 ; and the removal of other ceremonial uncleanness, Lev. 15 : 15, 30 ; on any accidental breach of the Nazaritic vow, or at its conclusion, Num. 6 ; comp. Acts 21 : 26 ff. Freewill burnt-offerings were accepted by God on any solemn occasion, Num. 7 ; 1 K. 8 : 64. But, except on such occasions, the nature, the extent, and the place of the sacrifice were expressly limited by God, so that, while all should be unblemished and pure, there should be no idea, as among the heathen, of buying his favor by costliness of sacrifice." 2. The same writer thus describes the ceremonial of the burnt-offering : "The animal was to be a male unblemished, either a young bullock, ram, or goat, or in case of poverty, a turtle-dove or pigeon. It was to be brought by the offerer 'of his own voluntary will,' and slain by himself on the north side of the altar, after he had laid his hand upon its head, to make it his own representative. The priest was then to sprinkle the blood upon the altar, and afterwards to cut up and burn the whole victim, only reserving the skin for himself. The birds were to be offered similarly, but not divided. See Lev. 1 ; 7 : 8 ; 8 : 18–21 ff." It was the sacrifice of the poor that the parents of Jesus presented forty days after his birth, Lev. 1 : 14 ; 5 : 7 ; 12 : 8 ; Luke 2 : 24. 3. While it is probable that the primary meaning of the burnt-offering was the dedication of the offerer to the service of Jehovah ; that hence it was usually preceded by a sin-offering, since we should dedicate ourselves, recognizing our sins, and invoking pardon ; and that hence, also, the victim was to be without spot, since we should endeavor to present ourselves to God not only justified by the blood of Christ, but sanctified by his grace, there was still in the burnt-offering, as in all others, a minor recognition of sin ; for he who presented it was required to lay his hands on the head of the victim, an action symbolical of con-

and for the sin-offering, and for the trespass-offering, and

fession; and it was "accepted for him to make atonement," Lev. 1:4. 4. The burnt-offering was the perpetual sacrifice of the law; it was presented morning and evening in behalf of the whole people; and during the night, when the altar was required for no other purpose, it was so slowly consumed that it lasted till the morning, Ex. 29:38-46; Num. 28:3; Lev. 6:9. Thus the redeemed nation expressed its perpetual dedication. 5. The burnt-offering was not only preceded by the sin-offering, but it was followed by the oblation and the drink-offering; see on Ex. 40:29; for the true dedication of the person to God is incomplete without a dedication of the property, represented by the food, and a joyous and thankful spirit, represented by the wine. 6. From what has been said, it is evident that the burnt-offering pointed to Christ, who gave himself without spot to God, on whose head all our sins were laid, and who was not the mere type of a surrender to the divine service, but the very embodiment and example of such a surrender, Heb. 5:1, 3, 7, 8. 7. While the worshipper who presented the sin-offering represented the sinner as he first comes to Christ for pardon, the worshipper who presented the burnt-offering represented the Christian for whom the sin-offering has been presented and accepted, who already stands within the covenant, who needs to ever lay his hands afresh on the Victim of Calvary, confessing his sins, whose attitude, however, is also one of daily and perpetual dedication to the service of his divine Master, Rom. 12:1. 8. The burnt-offering of an individual was to be presented of his own free will, Lev. 1:3. God does not love or accept an unwilling or half-hearted dedication of ourselves, 2 Cor. 9:7.

The oblation. See the marginal note of Dr. Bliss. See also on Ex. 40:29. The typical meaning of the oblation is evident from the following considerations: 1. It was appended to all the burnt-offerings specified in the preceding note, as also to the peace-offerings, and it is doubtful if it was ever presented separately. The reason for this close association of the oblation with the bloody sacrifices is probably to be found in its distinctive character: it had no confession of sin and almost no feature which pointed to the expiation of guilt on Calvary. 2. It was always followed by the drink-offering of wine; for that dedication of our property which is not made willingly and joyously is not acceptable to God, Ex. 29:4; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:5, 10. 3. It was composed chiefly of fine flour, representing the best of God's gifts. 4. It was to contain no leaven; for leaven, as the beginning of decay, and as that which induces decay in the flour with which it is mixed, was regarded as the symbol of moral corruption, Matt. 16:6; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9. We must present our property to Jehovah not with unsanctified motives and with impenitent hearts, nor must we seek to blind and cheat our consciences by offering to him that which we have gained by sin. 5. Honey was also excluded. FAIRBAIRN: "As, therefore, the corrupting element of leaven was forbidden, to indicate the contrariety of everything spiritually corrupt to the pure worship and service of God, so here, the most luscious production of nature was also prohibited, to indicate that what is peculiarly pleasing to the flesh is distasteful to God, and must be renounced by his faithful servants." These peculiarly pleasing things which God rejects are only such as are condemned by his law, and not such as are in themselves innocent. 6. Salt was mingled with this offering, as with all others, Lev. 2:13; Mark 9:49, 50. It is regarded in the Old Testament as a symbol of a friendly covenant, as it still is in the East, and hence, it had a fit place in the symbolry of the covenant between God and man, Lev. 2:13. In presenting our gifts to God, out of a sanctified and joyous heart, we have a right to expect the fulfilment of his covenant promises in Christ. 7. Oil was also an ingredient. It is uniformly the symbol of the Holy Spirit; and its use in the oblation denoted that all our gifts to the cause of God should be made out of impulses proceeding from the Spirit of God. 8. Incense was to be presented with the oblation, as the symbol of prayer, denoting that all our gifts should be presented to God with prayer.

The sin-offering. This sacrifice set forth more clearly than any other the guilt of the offerer, and the way of salvation through the atonement. FAIRBAIRN: "This species of sacrifice has so peculiarly to do with sin, that its very name is identified with it; in Hebrew, the common term for sin is also the term for sin-offering." It is supposed by most writers that while the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, and the oblation were known before the giving of the Law, the sin-offering was a purely Mosaic institution. Its name does not occur in the Bible before the time of Moses, though sacrifices and offerings are frequently mentioned, unless Gen. 4:7 be an exception, which is not probable. Moreover, since by the law is the knowledge of sin, it is natural to suppose that the sin-offering had its origin after the publication of the Law in response to the newly-awakened desire of the conscience. The ideas of sin and propitiation were latent in the earlier sacrifices; but the power given by the Law to the conviction of sin, and the yearning for reconciliation with God, called for a distinct service, wholly dedicated to their expression. Hence in the Book of Leviticus other offerings are mentioned before it, not because of their superior importance, for they are subordinate; but because they existed first, and are enumerated in historical order, Lev. chs. 1-4. The language of

for the sacrifice of consecration, and for the sacrifice of

Leviticus also seems to assume the previous existence of the other services, while it commands and institutes this; comp. Lev. 1 : 2, 10; 2 : 1; 3 : 1 with Lev. 4 : 1-4 ff.

In the legislation concerning this sacrifice we may distinguish the following peculiarities: 1. One who had contracted mere ceremonial defilement, as by touching a carcass, was to be purified by the use of the sin-offering. The ground of this requirement may have been that as the unclean thing which produced ceremonial defilement was the symbol of the moral defilement, it must be treated in the law like that for which it stood. But it may also teach us that the breach of a purely ceremonial law is sinful, and that contact with moral corruption is inevitably contaminating. 2. Sins of ignorance were to be followed, when discovered, by the sin-offering, Num. 15 : 22-29. By sins of ignorance we are not merely to understand those deeds that we supposed to be virtuous when we committed them; but also sins of negligence, when we are off our guard, and the temptations of life overcome us, Acts 3 : 17; 1 Pet. 1 : 14. Sins of ignorance still require repentance and atonement; for we have no right to be ignorant of God's requirements; nor have we a right to grow negligent and unwatchful. 3. Presumptuous sins, committed with a high hand, could not be atoned for by the sin-offering, Num, 15 : 22-31. These sins of presumption were such as were committed in the face of all knowledge, and with deliberate and rebellious determination. Had not such a provision been made, the vilest offenders would have continued in crime, satisfying their consciences by the formalities of sacrifice. We thus learn that the atonement of Christ will accomplish no good for those who continue to disobey him, Heb. 10 : 26-31; 1 Cor. 5 : 2-6, 13; 1 Tim. 1 : 20. Those who live in sin, expecting Christ to save them, are woefully deceived. 4. There was a gradation in the value of the victims appointed for the sin-offering, corresponding to the station of those for whom they were offered, Lev. 4. A private member of the congregation offered a female kid; a ruler a male kid; when atonement was made for the whole congregation and the High-priest, the victim was usually a young bullock; but on the great day of atonement the offering for the congregation was to consist of two goats, and that of the High-priest was a bullock. FAIRBAIRN: "There was thus perpetually brought out in connection with the means of atonement, the solemn truth that while all sin is so offensive in the sight of heaven as to deserve the penalty of death, it grows in offensiveness with the rank and number of the transgressors; and that, so far from there being in God's kingdom any such partiality as might infer a privilege of sinning, the higher one's standing, the greater is the Divine displeasure and the retribution;" Ezek. 9 : 6. 5. The same distinction is observed in the various treatments of the blood of the various sacrifices, Lev. ch. 4. The blood of the victim for a single individual, ruler or subject, was to be poured round about the brazen altar, and sprinkled upon its horns. A part of the blood shed for the sins of the High-priest, Lev. 4 : 3; comp. Lev. 16 : 32 with Ps. 133 : 2, or of the congregation, was to be carried into the Holy Place where the priest was to sprinkle it with his finger seven times before the vail of the Most Holy Place, and also upon the altar of incense. On the great day of atonement it was to be carried into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled on the very mercy-seat itself. We are taught by this the same lesson concerning the greatness of the sins of those who are conspicuous, and hence able to mislead others, and of national sins; but we are taught also that the blood of atonement avails for even these. On the great day of atonement we have moreover a picture of our Saviour passing into heaven there to present his blood before the throne of God, and pray for all penitent sinners. 6. The sin-offering, as directly representing Christ, was considered peculiarly holy. If its blood was sprinkled by accident on a garment, the garment was to be washed in the precincts of the Sanctuary, that the blood might not be carried out to places that were less sacred, Lev. 6 : 27. Only the best and richest of the flesh was burned upon the altar; the rest was eaten by the priests: but it was declared to be "most holy;" and it was eaten by God's ministers in token of His acceptance of the atonement, Lev. 10 : 16, 17. If the offering was for the High-priest himself, or for the congregation of which he was a member, it was not eaten, for the priest could not eat his own sin offering, not standing between himself and God: it was therefore taken without the camp into a clean place, for it was most holy, and there burned, Heb. 13 : 11-13; Lev. 4 : 11, 12, 21; 6 : 30; 9 : 11: it was a type of our Lord who was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem. If any of the sin-offering was prepared in an earthen vessel, the vessel, being of such a kind as to absorb some of it, was to be broken: it was too holy to be subjected to common uses or carried beyond the bounds of the Sanctuary. Thus the atonement of Christ is supremely holy. What shall be done to those who neglect it as an "unholy thing," Heb. 10 : 28-30? 7. No oblation or drink-offering was permitted to immediately accompany the sin-offering. KURTZ: "The sin-offering was pre-eminently the atonement-offering: the idea of atonement came out so prominently that no room was left for the others." Thus, the atonement of Christ, when presented to us, should fill our souls and absorb our attention.

The trespass-offering. This was nearly allied to the sin-offering, both in ceremonial and signification; Lev. 5 : 14-6 : 7; 7 : 7. The directions concerning it begin at Lev. 5 : 14. The preceding verses of the chapter refer to the sin-offering, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12; but owing to a mis-translation

38 peace-offerings, which Jehovah commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, in the day when he commanded the sons of Israel to present their gifts to Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai.

V. 38. The Hebrew word is Corban, the same that appears in the New Testament, translated, in Mark 7 : 11.

of ver. 6 in the Common Version the whole chapter has been supposed to refer to the trespass-offering; and thus the difference between the two offerings has not been found. The distinction seems to be this : The sin-offering had reference to sin as committed simply against God, and as beyond the power of the sinner to repair ; while, in the words of FAIRBAIRN, the trespass-offerings "were offerings for sins in which the offence given or the debt incurred by the misdeed admitted of some sort of estimation and recompense, so that in addition to the atonement required for the iniquity, in the one point of view, there might also, in the other, be the exaction and the payment of a restitution," Lev. 6 : 1-5. Offences against the priests, as the non-payment of tithes or first-fruits, were to be succeeded by the trespass-offering, Lev. 5 : 15, 16. In all such cases a twofold debt was incurred; one to Jehovah, against whom the sin had been committed, and hence the sacrifice and confession of sin, and the other to the party who had been wronged, and hence restitution with the addition of one-fifth to the amount necessary to repair the injury. The trespass-offering was considered inferior to the sin-offering, since it referred chiefly to sin as committed against man, an inferior view of it. FAIRBAIRN: "Hence the blood was only poured around the altar, not sprinkled on the horns, nor carried within the Sanctuary; and on those more public and solemn occasions on which a whole series of offerings was to be presented, we never find the trespass-offering taking the place of the sin-offering, or occurring in addition to it, Ex. 29; Lev. 16; Num. 7 : 28, 29." The trespass-offering teaches us that we should repent of our sins and seek atonement for them, and that at the same time we should endeavor, so far as lies within our power, to make reparation to our fellow-men for the injuries which our sins have caused them.

The sacrifice of consecration. Of the priests; when all the offerings mentioned in this verse were made. See Ex. ch. 29. The first sacrifice was a sin-offering, Ex. 29 : 10-14 ; for the first act of consecration to God is the acceptance of pardon through the atonement. The second was the burnt-offering, vers. 15-18. After seeking and obtaining pardon the dedication of the person naturally follows. There was also the oblation, the dedication of the substances, Lev. 6 : 19-23. There was also the peace-offering, denoting the communion of the pardoned sinner with a reconciled God, vers. 19-23 ; Lev. 8 : 31, 32. The other ceremonies of the priestly consecration are described in Ex. 29 and Lev. 8.

The sacrifice of peace-offerings. See on Ex. 32 : 6. The sacrifice of the peace-offering was accompanied by the imposition of the worshipper's hands upon the head of the animal, and the sprinkling of the blood round about the altar, showing that it had relation to sin. The richest portion of the animal was burned ; a part of the flesh was given to the priest ; and the remainder was eaten by the offerer, together with any whom he might invite to share it with him. Among these, he was instructed to remember, besides his own friends, the Levite, whose living depended largely upon the gifts of the people, and the widow, and the fatherless, Deut. 12 : 18 ; 16 : 11. The sacrifice was the symbol of that joyful communion with God which the pardoned sinner obtains, and which he should enjoy in a spirit of benevolence, seeking to bring those who know it not to share it with him. There were three classes of peace-offerings known to the law and marked by a slight variation of observances; but in all the fundamental meaning was the same.

38. **On Mount Sinai.** The law referred to had been first delivered on Mount Sinai, Ex. chs. 29, 30. Its repetition from the Tabernacle, Lev. 1 : 1, was a part of the renewal of the covenant broken by the idolotry of the golden calf.

In the day....to present their gifts. Ex. 25 : 1, 2 ff.

In the wilderness of Sinai. See Ex. 19 : 1 ; Num. 1 : 1 ff. ; 26 : 63, 64.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

These are supplied in abundance in the notes upon the various sacrifices ; it only remains to give a few hints concerning the discreet use of the material thus supplied.

1. If the class is composed largely of unconverted pupils, let the teacher dwell upon the various points presented in connection with the sin-offering, and thus describe the way of salvation.

2. If the class is composed largely of Christians, the other offerings, which present the duty of dedicating our person and our substance, together with the sweet privilege of communion with God, will present the most profitable topics for extended illustration.

3. If in any class there are persons disposed to injure others in word or deed, their need of securing divine pardon and of making restitution may be inferred from the nature of the trespass-offering.

4. A sort of Pilgrim's Progress may be arranged by considering, (1) The sinner seeking salvation; the sin-offering and the trespass-offering; (2) The Christian seeking a full consecration of himself and his possessions; the burnt-offering and the oblation; (3) The blessed privileges of those who obtain forgiveness through the sin-offering of Calvary, and who dedicate themselves and their property to the service of God; the peace-offering.

LESSON XIX.—THE THREE GREAT FEASTS. LEV. 23 : 4–6, 15–22, 33–36.

THE FESTIVALS OF ISRAEL.

The marked days of the sacred year were, with one exception, days of feasting, and not of fasting. The only exception was the great Day of Atonement, Lev. 16; Acts 27 : 9. Jehovah loves to have his people rejoice. The later Israelites voluntarily instituted certain fasts, which are mentioned in the Old Testament, Zech. 7 : 1–7; 8 : 19, where also it is predicted that they shall be turned into occasions of rejoicing, Zech. 8 : 19. Thus, religion is happiness, and not gloom.

Besides the three great annual festivals of the lesson, the Israelites observed the Feast of Trumpets, and the great Day of Atonement. Besides these annual occasions, they observed the weekly Sabbath, the new moon, Num. 10 : 10; 28 : 11–15, the Sabbatical or seventh year, Ex. 23 : 11; Lev. 25 : 1–7; Deut. 15 : 1, and the year of Jubilee, Lev. 25 : 8–18, which completed seven weeks of years. The later Israelites voluntarily instituted many other festivals, some of which still survive among the Jews. Our Lord attended one of these, John 10 : 22.

The Sabbatic arrangements of the festivals should be observed, as serving to show that the whole system was the product of one mind. Rev. S. CLARK: "Pentecost occurs seven weeks after the Passover; the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles last seven days each; the days of holy convocation are seven in the year, viz.: two at the Passover, one at Pentecost, one at the Feast of Trumpets, one on the Day of Atonement, and two at the Feast of Tabernacles; the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as the Day of Atonement, falls in the seventh month of the sacred year; and, lastly, the cycle of annual feasts occupies seven months, from Nisan to Tisri." The Sabbath day, the Sabbatical year, and the year of Jubilee, which marked the completion of seven weeks of years, conform to the same order.

The three great festivals of the text had an agricultural significance. On the day after the Sabbath, at the Passover, a sheaf of the first-fruits of the barley-fields was waved before Jehovah. Until this offering was made neither bread from the early harvest, nor the ripe grain, nor the roasted heads of the unripe grain, a favorite and delicious food, could be eaten, Ex. 12 : 15–20; 13 : 6–10; 23 : 19; 34 : 26; Lev. 23 : 6–8; Deut. 16 : 2–8; Numb. 28 : 17–25. The Feast of Pentecost, exactly fifty days from the presentation of the first-fruits at the Paschal festival, signalized the close of the wheat-harvest, Ex. 23 : 16, 19; 34 : 22, 26; Num. 28 : 26–31; Deut. 16 : 9–12. The Feast of Tabernacles marked the close of the grape-harvest, the latest of the year; it was the national "harvest home," Ex. 34 : 22; Lev. 23 : 39; Deut. 16 : 13. The festivals were thus intimately connected. From the agricultural significance of these festivals some have inferred that they were instituted before Moses, and that he adopted them by divine direction, gave them a more religious aspect by prescribing their ceremonies, and enlarged their meaning by making them memorials of great events. The Passover, however, seems to have been a new ordinance; hence the particular and repeated directions concerning its observance. The first sheaf may have been associated with it with prophetic reference to what is related in Josh. 5 : 10–12, the enjoyment of the first-fruits of Palestine, the full and perfect deliverance from Egypt.

The circumstances of the great festivals were ordained by divine mercy and wisdom so as to interfere as little as possible with the industry and convenience of the people. Rev. S. CLARK: "The Passover was held just before the work of harvest commenced, Pentecost at the conclusion of the grain-harvest and before the vintage, the Feast of Tabernacles after all the fruits of the ground were gathered in. In winter, when travelling was difficult, there were no festivals." Moreover, no two days demanding complete cessation of worldly business and attention to holy observances occurred in immediate connection with each other; if at the feast there were two such sacred days, as at the Feasts of the Passover and Tabernacles, a number of days were made to intervene so that labor, or social intercourse, might be resumed; thus the wants of the people were kindly regarded.

These great feasts brought many incidental benefits to the people. 1. They were occasions of rest and joyful recreation. 2. As many of them were celebrated by family groups, they tended to encour age household love and piety. 3. They commemorated great events and national mercies, and so stimulated at once patriotism and gratitude to God. 4. The frequent mingling of the people from the most remote parts of Palestine fostered sociability, and prevented sectional and tribal jealousies. 5. The frequent assemblage of the nation at one religious centre to worship the same God promoted national

4 These are Jehovah's set times, holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their set times:

unity, hence the expedient of Jeroboam, 1 K. 12: 26, 27 to prevent the pilgrimage of his people to Jerusalem, which would have endangered his kingdom by producing a reunion with Judah. 6. MICHAELIS thinks that the great festivals also promoted internal commerce, by giving rise to something like our modern fairs, as among the Mohammedans similar festivals have had this effect. 7. The same author shows more clearly that the festivals exerted an important influence in promoting such astronomical observations as were necessary to the exact determination of the festival seasons and the preservation of an accurate calendar.

Certain observances were common to all these occasions. 1. All had a day or days of special sanctity, called Sabbaths, and days of holy convocation, marked by the cessation of labor, Lev. 16: 29; 23: 7, 8, 21, 24, 25, 28, 35, 36. 2. GINSBURG: "On all of these special days special sacrifices were offered, in addition to the daily offerings, which, however, varied according to the character of the festival, comp. Num. 28 and 29. 3. On all of them the trumpets were blown whilst the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings were sacrificed, Num. 10: 10." The trumpets expressed the joy of the worshippers and also answered the purpose of our church-bells, to announce the time of special service and call the people together. While the festivals thus had much in common the three great feasts of the lesson were distinguished from the rest by a special appellation, derived from a word which signifies *to dance, to be joyful;* for they were occasions of peculiar rejoicing.

At the three great feasts of the lesson all the male Jews of suitable age were commanded "to appear before the Lord," at the Tabernacle or Temple, Ex. 34: 23. The attendance of women was voluntary; the more pious women often attended the Passover, Luke 2: 41; 1 Sam. 1: 7; 2: 19. Those males who could not observe the Passover at its proper season, were directed to observe it on the corresponding day of the next month, Num. 9: 10, 11. The commandment in reference to the appearance of the whole male population at these feasts was doubtless interpreted with reasonable latitude, as also was the law of the Sabbath by even the extreme legalists of Christ's Day, Matt. 12: 1-13, so that necessity could be plead as an excuse for non-compliance. Yet even a partial observance of the law must have left the country in a comparatively defenceless condition, subject to the inroads of enemies. The danger was expressly provided against in the promise of God, Ex. 34: 23, 24. It is remarkable that the promise was literally fulfilled. BROWN: "During the whole period between Moses and Christ we never read of an enemy invading the land at the time of the three festivals. The first instance on record was thirty-three years after they had withdrawn from themselves the divine protection by imbruing their hands in the Saviour's blood, when Cestius, the Roman General, slew fifty of the people of Lydda, while all the rest were gone up to the Feast of Tabernacles." God had expressly disinherited the Jews from the promises before this, Matt. 21: 33-43; Rom. 9: 30-33; 11: 11-15, 17-21.

All the festivals described in the Mosaic law, except the Sabbatic year and the year of Jubilee, are observed by the modern Jews; but not according to the divine direction. They have *four*, instead of *two* holy days during the Passover, *two* at Pentecost, *two* at the Feast of Trumpets, *one* on the Day of Atonement, *four* at the Feast of Tabernacles; thus, instead of *seven*, as Moses ordained, they nearly double the number, and observe *thirteen*, thus destroying the sacred symmetry of the Sabbatic number. GINSBURG: "The origin of these additions was this: The commencement of the festivals was fixed in Palestine according to the appearance of the new moon, which was watched in Jerusalem and communicated from the metropolis throughout the country by messengers. But as these messengers could not reach the most distant parts for some days, and as the inhabitants of those parts could not know at once how the beginning of the new month was fixed, and on what day the festival began, it was determined that they should double the day of the festival so as to be sure that one day was right." Thus two days in succession, both at the beginning and at the close of the feast, were observed as specially holy. The change is supposed to have been introduced near the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, in the days "of anise and mint and cummin." Some of these festivals among the modern Jews are necessarily deprived of their agricultural significance; and all of them are observed without sacrifice and offering since the destruction of the Temple; they are therefore celebrated merely as memorials of national events.

4. These are the Jehovah's set times, holy convocations. The directions of the present chapter were not designed to furnish a complete list of the Hebrew festivals, or a complete code of ceremonies for any one of them, but rather to regulate the days of holy convocation throughout the year, ver. 2. These days of holy convocation were in fact Sabbath days, when no servile work could be done, and when the people assembled for solemn and joyous worship, both at the national sanctuary and in the cities and villages throughout the land. The preparation of food, however, was permitted, Ex. 12: 16, except upon the weekly Sabbath and the great Day of Atonement, when it was strictly prohibited, as was also the kindling of fire, Ex. 20: 10; 35: 3; Lev. 23: 28, 30.

5 In the first month, on the fourteenth of the month, be-
6 tween the two evenings, is the passover to Jehovah; and on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread to Jehovah: seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Works of necessity and mercy were never prohibited, Matt. 12 : 14; Luke 14 : 5. Besides the weekly Sabbath, ver. 3, there were seven of these days, a week of holy days in each year: there were two at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, vers. 7, 8, one on the Day of Pentecost, ver. 21, one at the Feast of Trumpets, ver. 24, one at the Day of Atonement, vers. 27–32, and two at the Feast of Tabernacles, vers. 35, 36.

In the lesson we are to consider but three of the Hebrew festivals, the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Day of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Rev. S. CLARK: "The general word rendered *feasts* in our version, vers. 2, 4, 37, etc., is *mō'adim*, which signifies literally *appointed times*. The three festivals, often called the Great Festivals, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, to which the name *chag*, i. e., a *feast* or *rejoicing*, properly belongs, vers. 6, 34, 39, 41, were distinguished by the attendance of the male Israelites at the national sanctuary. Hence they were enumerated with the formula, 'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God,' Ex. 23 : 17; 34 : 23; Deut. 16 : 16. In later times they were called by the Rabbins 'pilgrimage feasts.' It is worthy of note that the Hebrew word is identical with the Arabic *haj*, the name of the pilgrimage to Mecca, from which comes the well-known word for a pilgrim, *hajî*." It is supposed that the Psalms, which in the Common Version are called *Songs of Degrees*, are really pilgrim psalms, written for the use of the Israelites during their journeys to and from the three great feasts. The teacher will understand the spirit of the ancient Hebrew pilgrims by reading these brief but exquisite Psalms, which begin with the 120th and close with the 134th.

5. **The first month.** Abib, afterwards called Nisan, Neh. 2 : 1, made the first month in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, Ex. 12 : 1, previous to which the year began with the month Tisri, immediately after the harvest was gathered, Ex. 23 : 16. Abib probably began about the middle of March, so that the 14th day, when the Passover was slain, fell about the first of April. But as the Hebrew sacred calendar was regulated by the changes of the moon, it has only an imperfect correspondence to ours.

Between the two evenings. The evenings which brought the 14th day to a close. The evening is usually regarded in the Scriptures as marking the beginning of the day; its use here in reference to the close of the day is explained by a reference to the peculiar phrase "between the two evenings," the first evening being the time immediately before sunset, and the second the twilight which followed; see Matt. 14 : 15, 23. The first evening was the close of the day; the second is usually regarded as the beginning of the new day; but where both are mentioned they are regarded as together bringing the day to an end.

The passover to Jehovah. See on Ex. 12 : 21–30, 51.

6. **The fifteenth day of this month.** The day following the Passover.

The feast of unleavened bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is thus expressly distinguished from the Passover, see Ex. 12 : 6, 15, 17; Num. 28 : 16, 17. But in common usage the two names were convertable, as also, practically, the two feasts were but one, having the same reference to the deliverance from Egypt. That they are distinguished in name at all is perhaps owing to the distinction of their spiritual meaning, the Passover pointing forward to Jesus, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the purity which should characterize those who have been delivered from the bondage of sin by the blood of the Lamb. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was so called from the fact that before the paschal lamb was slain all leaven was put out of the dwellings of the people; and they were prohibited from using it during the festival. It was thus excluded partly in commemoration of the hasty departure from Egypt, which left no time for the preparation of leavened bread, and partly also with reference to the meaning of leaven as the symbol of moral corruption, Matt. 13 : 33; 16 : 6; 1 Cor. 5 : 7.

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. See the preceding note. The feast continued seven days.

The succeeding verses in reference to this festival provide for two days of holy convocation; see on ver. 4; and for the presentation of the first-fruits of the harvest; see on the agricultural reference of the festivals the essay which introduces the lesson, fourth paragraph. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was ideally completed only when the people had become so firmly established in Palestine that they enjoyed its harvests; hence, probably, the association of the first-fruits with the paschal feast. A burnt-offering and an oblation were also made in connection with the presentation of the first-fruits; see

15 And ye shall count for you from the morrow after the
sabbath, from the day when ye bring the wave-sheaf;
16 seven sabbaths shall be complete. Unto the morrow after
the seventh sabbath ye shall count fifty days; and ye
17 shall present a new oblation to Jehovah. From your habi-
tations ye shall bring wave-bread, two loaves of two

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the preceding lesson. Thus in this festival we have the Lamb of God, the deliverance of the sinner, the dedication of the person and property of the redeemed soul, together with the fruits of its life, and the joy of its thanksgiving; see Practical Observations. The general features of the whole solemnity are described under Ex. 12 : 21–30, 51.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

15. **The morrow after the sabbath.** There was to be a Sabbath or day of holy convocation on the 15th of Abib, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; but the words of the text probably refer to the first weekly Sabbath of the paschal season. The first of the harvest mentioned there was offered on the day following the Sabbath, rather than on the Sabbath itself, because the work of cutting it probably formed a part of the ceremony, and because the offering of it was regarded as the beginning of the harvest toil.

From the day when ye bring the wave-sheaf. The Day of Pentecost was to be determined by counting from the offering of the first-fruits in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because there was a most intimate connection between the offering of the first sheaf and the observance of Pentecost; the former celebrated the beginning of the grain harvest, and the latter its termination, Ex. 23 : 16, 19; 34 : 22, 26; Num. 28 : 26–31; Deut. 16 : 9–12.

Seven sabbaths shall be complete. That is, the seventh Sabbath must have passed before the Day of Pentecost, which thus fell upon the Christian Sabbath.

16. **Unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath.** This would be the fiftieth day after the presentation of the first-fruits. Hence the name *Pentecost*, which the festival finally gained. In the Old Testament it is called "the feast of harvest," Ex. 23 : 16, "the feast of weeks," "the feast of the first-fruits of wheat harvest," Ex. 34 : 22; Deut. 16 : 10, and "the day of the first-fruits," Num. 28 : 26. It is called Pentecost first in the Apocrypha, Tobit 2 : 1; 2 Mac. 12 : 32, and the New Testament knows it by this name exclusively, Acts 2 : 1; 20 : 16; 1 Cor. 16 : 8. It is called "the feast of the first-fruits of the wheat harvest," not because it marked the beginning of the wheat harvest, but rather, as we learn upon Rabbinical authority, because no offering of first-fruits, except the sheaf of the paschal season, could be made in the temple before the Day of Pentecost; because the offering of the paschal season was not of wheat, it being yet too early; and because the first offering of the wheat harvest was made on the Day of Pentecost, when the wheat harvest was regarded as complete. The two loaves of Pentecost were actually the "first-fruits" of the wheat harvest, Ex. 23 : 19. The Rabbins say that between Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles was the proper period for the voluntary offerings of first-fruits.

A new oblation. New, because composed of flour from the new harvest. The offering is described in the next verses.

17. **Your habitations.** Not *your houses*, but *the country in which ye abide;* such seems to be the force of the original expression. The flour must be the product of the land, not imported. The idea that each householder was to bring two loaves has little foundation.

Wave-bread. It is called "wave-bread" because it was waved before Jehovah. The peace-offering was usually the one thus waved; and this circumstance gives us the clue to the meaning of the ceremony. The peace-offering was that in which God and man communed together, at peace with one another. The sacrifice was first heaved, or raised, and then waved to and fro; the first action was a recognition of God as enthroned in heaven, the second of his condescension in visiting every quarter of the earth and granting his reconciled presence to sinful men.

Two loaves. The leavened loaf was somewhat thicker than the unleavened. It was round about a span in diameter and a finger's breadth in thickness; and not unlike a flat stone in shape and appearance, Matt. 7 : 9, comp. 4 : 3. Three such loaves were required for the meal of a single individual, Luke 11 : 5. We should call them cakes. The loaves of Pentecost were probably of the same form; but they were certainly much larger; as about three and a half quarts of flour went to each.

Two tenths. The *deals* of the Common Version is now obsolete. The meaning is *two tenth*

tenths; they shall be of flour; leavened shall they be
18 baked; first-fruits to Jehovah. And ye shall present with
the bread seven perfect sheep of a year old, and one
young bullock and two rams; they shall be a burnt-
offering to Jehovah, and their oblation and their drink-
19 offering; a fire-offering of a sweet odor to Jehovah. And
ye shall prepare one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two

parts. The parts are understood to be of the ephah. See Ex. 16 : 36. Each *tenth* represented an omer, probably about four-fifths of a gallon. To each cake a tenth of flour was assigned: and the two therefore represented two tenths. See above on the *wave-bread.*

Flour. The best things should be presented to God and to his ministers. The Rabbins say that the flour was carefully sifted twelve times to ensure its fineness. This, however, must have been in the later era of Pharisaic indifference to the major and particularity about the minor matters of the law, the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin; for the idea of the sacrifice was to take the best of just such things as the people had; hence the *leaven* of the next note, marking the bread as that which was ordinarily used in the household.

Leavened. Usually, leaven was excluded from the offerings, as the symbol of moral corruption. It was always excluded from the offerings to be burned upon the altar; but as these loaves were to be eaten by the priests, it was admitted in this solitary instance. It had also an appropriate symbolical reference to the purpose of the festival; as the loaves were intended to represent the best produce of the earth in the actual condition in which man most enjoys it; in this condition it was most appropriate as an emblem of thanksgiving for the harvest.

First-fruits to Jehovah. If we would have communion with God, such as was typified in the peace-offering of the Pentecostal loaves, we must not withhold from him the finest and best of our substance. The several references to first-fruits in the New Testament seem to have been faintly suggested by the first-fruits of this festival; Rom. 11 : 16; 1 Cor. 15 : 20, 23; James 1 : 18; Rev. 14 : 4. It was also with some reference to the significance of the day that it was chosen for the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the presentation to God of the first-fruits of his special presence and power in the Church.

18. **With the bread.** At the same time, but in a different manner. The bread was offered to God through the priests, who ate it as his representatives and familiars, ver. 20; while the sheep and the bullock were offered by fire.

Perfect. As types of Christ, who was offered a sinless victim; and also as types of the Israelites in whose behalf the offering was made, who thus dedicated themselves to the service of Jehovah, and whose duty it was, as it is ours, to present themselves in holiness of heart and life.

One bullock. All the animals used in sacrifice were required to be young. In the case of the lamb, the kid, and the calf, the requirements seem to refer to the innocence and mildness of the victim as fitly representing characteristics of our Lord, and as setting forth traits that should distinguish the offerer; in the case of sheep and cattle, which could be offered only while young, it seems to refer to the perfection of strength and beauty which was to characterize Christ, our sacrifice, and which ought to mark the soul of the worshipper.

A burnt-offering. To be wholly consumed by fire. See on Ex. 32 : 6 and Lev. 7 : 37, where it is observed that the burnt-offering, while not excluding the idea of expiation through the sacrifice of Christ, signified chiefly the self-dedication of the worshipper who made it.

Oblation. See on Ex. 40 : 29 and Lev. 7 : 37. The burnt-offering of the text, which set forth the dedication of the worshipper, was to be accompanied with the usual oblation, which represented the dedication of his property.

Drink-offering. See on Ex. 40 : 29 and Lev. 7 : 37. The drink-offering always accompanied the oblation, setting forth not only the dedication of the substance, but the thankful joy with which the dedication was made.

Of a sweet odor. The odor of roasting flesh, so sweet to man, was the symbol, as it filled the air and arose to heaven, of holy dispositions in the soul which the offering represented, whether that of Christ or that of the worshipper.

19. **He-goat.** This was the regular sin-offering at the great festivals, Lev. 15 : 9, 15; 23 : 19; Num. 28 : 15, 22, 30; 29 : 5, 16, and at the consecration of priests, Lev. 9 : 3, 15; 10 : 16.

Sin-offering. See on Lev. 7 : 37.

20 sheep of a year old, for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits, as a waving before Jehovah, with the two sheep:
21 holy shall they be to Jehovah for the priest. And ye shall proclaim this very day; a holy convocation shall it be to you; no servile work shall ye do; a statute forever in all your habitations, for your generations.
22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not finish the corners of thy field in thy reaping; and the

Sheep of a year old. See on the *bullock* of ver. 18.

Peace-offerings. See on Ex. 40 : 29 and Lev. 7 : 37.

In addition to the sacrifices mentioned in vers. 18, 19, two young bulls and one ram were offered, Num. 28 : 26, 27.

20. **Wave.** See on the *wave-bread* of ver. 17.

Them. The peace-offerings; as is evident from the more particular specification of *the two sheep* immediately afterwards.

With the bread. The loaves of ver. 17. The expressions of the present verse show that they were regarded as a peace-offering.

Holy shall they be. The peace-offerings. The larger part of the peace-offering was usually eaten by the offerer with his invited guests, but the offerer on this occasion was the nation, for whom, of course, the sacrifice could not constitute a meal. Hence the priests, as representing at once both Jehovah and Israel, ate it in behalf of both. The Rabbins say that one loaf was given to the High-priest, and the other to the assisting priests, that both were eaten the same night in the sanctuary, and that no fragment was permitted to remain till the morning.

21. **This very day.** The day of Pentecost. This festival lasted but a single day. The Jews now, however, observe two days, in order to meet the possibility of an error in calculating the true time. Jewish writers affirm that while the Temple was standing, though but one day was observed with religious rites, the festivities and the contributions of gifts lasted seven days.

Holy convocation. See on ver. 4.

Servile work. Literally, *work of labor*, that is, work which belongs to the ordinary labors of one's worldly calling. Works of necessity and mercy are of course not prohibited.

In all your habitations. The males only were obliged to appear before Jehovah at the Tabernacle or the Temple; and many of even these would be compelled to remain at home. The day was to be observed as one of rest and religious assemblage, not only by those who had made the pilgrimage, but by all. Each city and village therefore celebrated it.

At the feast of Pentecost, as at the other feasts, free-will offerings were to be made by every one who came to the sanctuary, according to his ability, Deut. 16 : 10.

The season was marked as one of great rejoicing, and hence of thankful liberality to the needy and to servants, Deut. 16 : 11, 12.

The Rabbins say that the Hallel was sung not only at the Passover, but also on the day of Pentecost and at the Feast of Tabernacles.

The concourse of Jews, not only from Palestine, but from foreign lands, who attended the festivities in Jerusalem according to the law, was very great, Acts 2. Hence the wisdom of God in selecting this day for the outpouring of his Spirit, that multitudes might feel the influence, and that the gospel might be carried at once into all the known world by the converts who returned to their homes.

The later Jews regard the feast of Pentecost as a memorial of the giving of the Law, which they say took place fifty days after the first Passover. They seek to establish the date from Ex. 19. It is also thought that the connection of the festival with the publication of the Law is hinted in Deut 16 : 12. But it is not certain that the interval between the Exodus and the giving of the Law was precisely fifty days; the passage in Deuteronomy seems intended merely to awaken thanksgiving; Philo and Josephus are entirely silent as to any connection between the publication of the Law and the feast of Pentecost; and the theory seems to be destitute of all sound evidence.

The Passover and the Feast of Pentecost were directly connected in significance: as national observances, the first represented the deliverance from Egypt; the second, the perfect possession of the

gleaning of thy harvest thou shalt not glean; for the poor and for the stranger shalt thou leave them. I am Jehovah thy God.

33 34 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles seven days to Jehovah.

35 On the first day is a holy convocation: no servile work

promised land: as agricultural festivals, the first represented the beginning of the grain-harvest; the second, its termination.

Spiritually, therefore, the first is the symbol of the atonement, by which the soul is delivered from the bondage of sin, while the second represents the rejoicing of the soul, thus delivered, in the new life of peace with which it is blessed. The first is the successful struggle of the seeker; the second, the happy experience of the possessor. Hence, also, the first has primary reference to the work of Christ, who died as our Passover, at the Paschal season; the second to the work of the Holy Spirit, who began his reign of joy and peace on the day of Pentecost, presenting to God the first-fruits of the earth's harvest. The day of Pentecost was thus, in one sense, the birthday of the Church; and it may have been on this account that Paul, who understood its high significance, desired to observe it in Jerusalem, Acts 20: 16; 1 Cor. 16: 8.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

33. **Jehovah spoke to Moses.** See on Ex. 6: 1 and Lev. 7: 37, 38, introductory note on *The Book of Leviticus*.

34. **The fifteenth day.** The Passover also began on the fifteenth day of the month.

This seventh month. There is no question that the months of the religious year were lunar; they began with the new moon. The months of the year were twelve; and they were usually designated by their numbers, as in the text. They had names, however, which were less frequently employed. The seventh month was called Ethanim: the meaning of the name is doubtful. The season was the autumn, when all the chief fruits had been gathered, and before the commencement of the rains, Ex. 23: 16; Lev. 23: 39; Deut. 16: 13–15.

Tabernacles. Booths, huts, or sheds: those used at the festival were constructed of boards and covered with boughs. The Hebrew word does not refer to tents, for which there was another term. Rev. S. CLARK: "These huts, when the festival was celebrated in Jerusalem, were constructed in the courts of houses, on the roofs, in the court of the temple, in the street of the Water Gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. The boughs were of the olive, palm, pine, myrtle, and other trees with thick foliage, Neh. 8: 15, 16." The design of this dwelling in booths is stated in ver. 43; it was a memorial of the tent life which the fathers had led at the Exodus, either at its beginning, when it is probable that they threw up temporary structures at night, not having as yet provided themselves with tents; or more probably during the whole period of the wanderings in the wilderness, when they dwelt partly in tents, and perhaps partly, while in the more fertile districts, in huts and booths. The structure of boughs would be a convenient and inexpensive representation of the tent. To require every family to provide a tent would have subjected many to great expense; and the celebration would have lacked the peculiarly festive character which belonged to it, and which the green boughs helped to impart.

Seven days. The feast lasted but seven days; there followed, however, an eighth day of holy convocation, ver. 39, which, strictly speaking, formed no part of the festival, ver. 36; Num. 29: 35; Neh. 8. 18, since the people abandoned the booths and dismantled them in the morning.

To Jehovah. The festival was strictly religious. Religion and festive rejoicing are not antagonistic.

35. **Holy convocation.** See on ver. 4.

Servile work. See on ver. 21.

36. **Seven days.** The sacrifices are described more particularly in Num. 29: 12–38. Rev. S. CLARK: "On each of the days, including the eighth, a shaggy he goat was sacrificed for a sin-offering. On each of the seven days of the festival proper, the burnt-offering consisted of two rams, fourteen lambs, and a number of young bulls, beginning with thirteen on the first day, but diminishing by one on each successive day till, on the seventh, the number was reduced to seven. The whole number of bulls sacrificed during the week thus amounted to seventy. On the eighth day the burnt-offering consisted

36 shall ye do. Seven days shall ye present fire-offerings to Jehovah; on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation

of only one bull, one ram, and seven lambs." Thus, also, the eighth day was distinguished from the seven days of the festival.

But while the festival was thus characterized by its abundance of burnt-offerings, it was equally characterized by the abundance of its oblations. Each of the seventy bullocks was accompanied by an abundant oblation and drink-offering; and as the number of bullocks diminished daily, so also did the number of oblations and drink-offerings, so that there were thirteen on the first day, and seven on the seventh. There were obvious reasons why the feast should be thus especially marked by these two kinds of sacrifice. It was the feast of ingathering, the national harvest-home; and it was the fitting season to dedicate the person in burnt-offerings, see on Ex. 32 : 6 and Lev. 7 : 37, and the property, increased by the harvests of the season, in oblations and drink-offerings; see on Lev. 7 : 37.

36. **Fire-offerings.** All offerings made by fire were thus named, whether sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, or peace-offerings.

Holy convocation. See on ver. 4.

No servile work. See on ver. 21.

The Feast of Tabernacles is recognized as a national harvest-home, ver. 39; Ex. 23 : 16; Deut 16 : 13–15.

Its reference to the wilderness life, noticed ver. 43, was designed to stir the heart to more profound gratitude by suggesting the contrast between the privation of that period and the plenty of the holy land and the gathered harvest.

During the festival in the Sabbatic years, portions of the Law were read every day in the hearing of the people, Deut. 31 : 10–13; Neh. 8 : 18; John 7 : 19.

There were two peculiar ceremonies on the first day of the feast, neither of which is mentioned in the Old Testament. On the morning of this day, each Israelite repaired to the Temple at the time of the ordinary morning sacrifice, bearing in his hand a bunch of boughs. A priest brought water in a golden vessel from the pool of Siloam. The trumpets sounded, and he ascended the slope of the great brazen altar, where were fixed two silver basins, connected with pipes leading to the Kidron below. The water was poured into that on the western side, and wine into that on the east. The Hallel was then sung, and when the singers reached Ps. 118 : 1 the company shook their boughs, a gesture which they repeated at vers. 25 and 29. It was probably to this service that Jesus referred, eight days after its termination, John 7 : 37, 38; it was such a marked feature of the occasion that all would understand his allusion, though the ceremony had been performed at the beginning of the feast which was then drawing to a close. The Jews regarded the water as a memorial of that which was supplied by miracle in the wilderness; but they also gave it a higher spiritual reference, connecting it with Isai. 12 : 3; and they would, therefore, not be unprepared to appreciate the spiritual meaning of our Saviour's words.

The other ceremony was performed after nightfall. It was the lighting of eight immense lamps, which cast their rays from the Temple courts over nearly the whole city, while many of the people carried torches, and the Levites played on instruments of music. It is probable that Christ alluded to this custom in John 8 : 12.

Every evening during the festival the people assembled in the court of the women, and passed the hours in hilarity tempered by a spirit of religion. For, though all the Hebrew festivals were occasions of joy, this was the most joyous of all, as marking the full deliverance from Egypt, the full possession of the land, the full fruition of harvest. The booths, and the boughs which the people bore in their hands, must have presented a brilliant spectacle by day; and the lights and singing at night testified to the happiness of the nation.

Spiritually, this feast represented the full fruition of heaven, where we shall call to mind the wilderness-life of the earth, where we shall celebrate the full ingathering of Christ's harvest, where we shall make a perfect dedication of all that we are and have, and where we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. The great spiritual features of the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread: (1) The slain Lamb, and the deliverance of the spiritual Israel through his blood, ver. 5. The soul that neglects this sacrifice shall die, Num. 9 : 13. (2) The unleavened bread, the type of that sanctification of heart and life which becomes those for whom the Lamb was slain, ver. 6, and without which the soul, in spite of the atonement of Christ, must perish, Ex. 12 : 15. (3) The dedication of the person and property of those who have been redeemed, typified by the burnt-offering and the oblation, vers. 12, 13; see on the preceding lesson. (4) The fruitful lives of those who, thus redeemed, sanctify themselves and their substance to the service of God, vers. 9–12. (5) The thankful joy of those who

for you, and ye shall present fire-offerings to Jehovah; it is a solemn assembly; no servile work shall ye do.

LESSON XX.—THE LORD'S MINISTERS. NUM. 3: 5–13.

5 AND Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: Bring the tribe
6 of Levi near, and cause them to stand before Aaron the

V. 36. *Or*, it is a restraint.

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are thus redeemed and consecrated; ver. 13, the drink-offering. (6) The duty of assembling for the public worship of him who has wrought for us such a wondrous salvation, vers. 7, 8.

2. The spiritual features of the Day of Pentecost. (1) The earthly life of the Christian, set forth in the whole observance. (2) This is marked by peace with God; symbolized by the wave-loaves as a peace-offering. (3) It is marked by great joy, Deut. 16: 11, 12. (4) It is marked by liberality to God, to his ministers, and to the poor, Deut. 16: 10–12. (5) It is the celebration of a harvest not yet complete, the offering of a fruitful life. (6) It is marked by the consecration of the person and the property; set forth in the burnt-offering and oblation of ver. 18. (7) It is most acceptable to God; it presents a sweet odor, ver. 18. (8) It is a life of trust in the blood of Christ, set forth in the sin-offering of ver. 19. (9) All these characteristics are the fruits of the Spirit; hence on this day the Holy Spirit descended, Acts 2; Gal. 5: 22; Eph. 5: 9.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles, the feast of heaven. (1) The ingathering of life's harvest, ver. 39. (2) The remembrance of earth's pilgrimage will be sweet beneath the green boughs of a restored paradise, vers. 40, 43. (3) An eternity of ceaseless rejoicing, ver. 40. (4) A life marked by perfect consecration of person and substance to Jehovah, who redeemed us, set forth in the seventy burnt-offerings and in the oblations and drink-offerings; on ver. 36. (5) A life distinguished by the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, set forth in the water of Siloam; see the note, and John 7: 37–39. (6). A world of glorious light set forth in the ceremony of the lamps; see note, and John 8: 12; Rev. 21: 23–25.

4. The three great feasts as representing the beginning, the happy progress, and the triumphant termination of a godly life.

5. The fifty days so carefully reckoned between the Passover and the Day of Pentecost, were a prophecy of the period which was to intervene between the death of Christ and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, procured by that death, vers. 15, 16.

The present lesson and the three which follow it are taken from the fourth book of Moses, the Book of Numbers, which is thus named from the two enumerations of the Israelites which it records in chs. 1 and 26. It relates the history of the chosen people from the termination of the law-giving at Sinai, Lev. 27: 34, to their assemblage in the plains of Moab, where the final preparations for the invasion of Palestine were made, and where Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy, which succeeds it. See introductory remarks of Lesson XVIII.

5. **Jehovah spoke to Moses.** His method of communication is stated in Ex. 25: 22 and Lev. 1: 1. The people were still in the plain before Sinai; the forward movement is recorded in ch. 10: 33.

6. **The tribe of Levi.** Descended from the third son of Jacob by Leah his wife. See on Ex. 2: 1. Aaron and his sons belonged to this tribe; but they were not usually reckoned as Levites in the technical sense; the tribe being divided into *priests and Levites*, the former term designating the sons of Aaron, the latter the remainder of the tribe, 1 K. 8: 4; Ezra 2: 70; John 1: 19. For exceptions to this usage, see Num. 35: 2; Josh. 21: 3, 41; Ex. 6: 25; Lev. 25: 32.

Near. JAMIESON: "The Hebrew word *bring near* is a sacrificial term, denoting the presentation of an offering to God; and the use of the word, therefore, in connection with the Levites, signifies that they were devoted as an offering to the Sanctuary, no longer to be employed in any common offices."

Cause them to stand. To be presented as assistants.

Aaron. See on Ex. 4: 27.

The priest. They were not presented to Aaron the man, but to Aaron the priest; they were not subjected, therefore, as personal servants to his will; but to an honorable ministry, regulated by law and sustained by the wealth of the people.

7 priest, and they shall minister to him. And they shall

The derivation of the Hebrew word for *priest* is still in doubt; the most plausible conjecture connects it with an Arabic root, which means *to draw near*. The priest was one who had the privilege of drawing near to God, whilst others remained afar off.

The institution of the priesthood had its origin in the patriarchal age, when the father of the household, or, at his death, the eldest son, not only ruled it, but offered up prayers and sacrifices in its behalf, Gen. 12 : 8; 18 : 23; 26 : 25; 33 : 20; 27 : 15; Job 1 : 5. We know not whether the office was created by revelation or arose spontaneously from the necessities of society and the nature of its patriarchal structure; but it is not improbable that the father, without special divine direction, considered it a part of his office to instruct his family in religious truth and invoke upon them the blessing of heaven. Occasionally, even in a patriarchal society, a priest might gain a wide reputation for knowledge, for zeal, for spiritual illumination; and in that case his offices would be sought by persons outside the limits of his own original charge; and such an one Melchizedek may have been, Gen. 14 : 18; Heb. 7 : 1-11. As the strictly patriarchial organization gave way to the tribal, the priesthood seems to have become a tribal office, so that each tribe had its own priest, whose special charge were the interests of the religion which it professed: an instance of the tribal priesthood may perhaps be found in Jethro, Ex. 2 : 16; 3 : 1. Finally, when the tribe gave place to the nation, a national priesthood was created by law; and the tribe ceased to sustain its local ministry and sanctuary.

Such a national priesthood existed in Egypt; the Israelites were brought into intimate contact with it through the marriage of Joseph into a priestly family, Gen. 41 : 45, and the education of Moses in priestly learning, Acts 7 : 22 and on Ex. 3 : 10; and it is probable that the priestly organization of the Hebrews was somewhat influenced by that of the Egyptians. The two priesthoods had in common (1) the shaving of the whole body, (2) garments of linen, (3) unshod feet, (4) multiplied ablutions, (5) a large share in the offerings, (6) a supreme High-priest, (7) and a law of hereditary succession. The institution had doubtless once been pure and holy; and Jehovah needed but to restore it to its original duties before the true God; he therefore freely took those features of it which were innocent and useful, rejecting only the corrupt, such as the use of magic and the worship of idols.

It is evident from Ex. 5 : 1, 3 and 19 : 22 that there was a special order of priests among the Israelites before the appointment of Aaron and his sons; but we know nothing of its organization. It was superseded by the Aaronic priesthood; as the Aaronic priesthood has been forever abolished by that of Christ, the "Great High-priest," Heb. 4 : 14.

The High-priest was distinguished from the subordinate priests (1) by being anointed at his consecration more abundantly than they, Lev. 8 : 12; 4 : 3, 5, 16; 21 : 10; Num. 35 : 25; Ex. 29 : 29, 30; Ps. 133 : 2; comp. Ex. 29 : 21; 28 : 41; (2) by his prophetic powers in consulting the Urim and Thummim; (3) by his peculiar dress, four articles of which were like those of other priests, and four quite distinct. The four distinct articles were (*a*) the breast-plate of twelve precious stones, on which were engraved the names of the tribes, (*b*) the ephod, or tunic, clasped together at the shoulders with two large onyx stones, each of which bore the names of six tribes, and fastened at the waist by a gorgeously colored girdle; (*c*) his blue garment worn under the tunic, below which it extended, the skirt trimmed with alternate pomegranates and bells of gold; (*d*) his mitre, with a golden plate in front, inscribed with "Holiness to Jehovah." (4) By his peculiar privilege of entering the Holy of Holies once each year, on the great Day of Atonement.

The functions of the subordinate priests were (1) to watch over the fire on the altar of burnt-offerings and to keep it burning all the night, Lev. 6 : 12; 2 Chron. 13 : 11; (2) to feed the golden lamps in the holy place, Ex. 27 : 20, 21; Lev. 24 : 2; (3) to offer the morning and evening sacrifices, Ex. 29 : 38-44; (4) to be always ready to assist the penitent or thankful Israelite in presenting his offering; (5) to teach the people the law of Jehovah, Lev. 10 : 11; Deut. 33 : 10; 2 Chron. 15 : 3; Ezek. 44 : 23; (6) to cultivate learning, Mal. 2 : 7; (7) to judge in difficult cases of litigation, Deut. 17 : 8-13.

The High-priest may be regarded, then, as the type of Christ, Heb. 2 : 17; 3 : 1; 4 : 14, 15; 5 : 5, 10; 7 : 26; 8 : 1; 10 : 21; and the subordinate priests as types not merely of him, Heb. 7 : 3, 11, 15, 20; 8 : 4; 10 : 11, but also of his followers, Rev. 1 : 6; 20 : 6; 1 Pet. 2 : 5, 9. Thus, referring to the distinguishing marks of the High-priest, we discover (1) that Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit more fully than any man, Matt. 3 : 16; John 3 : 34; (2) and is thus our prophet; (3) that he was clothed with our nature and also with the higher nature of deity, (4) by virtue of which he bears our names on his heart before God, and is crowned our king, (5) having entered for us the Holy of Holies on high. The subordinate priests represent the man of God (1) watching the fires of sacrifice in his heart, (2) and the burning lamp of devotion, (3) praying for all men, (4) and especially offering the sacrifice of prayer for the penitent, (5) instructing the people in the knowledge of God, (6) cultivating his own knowledge of the Creator by studying his word and his works, (7) and judging the world at last, 1 Cor. 6 : 2, 3. Both the High-priest and his subordinates were represented by their dress, and by all the laws concerning their habits, as peculiarly holy; the symbols of what Christ was, and of what

keep his charge, and the charge of all the congregation before the meeting-tent, to perform the service of the
8 dwelling. And they shall keep all the vessels of the meeting-tent, and the charge of the sons of Israel, to perform
9 the service of the dwelling. And thou shalt give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him out of the sons of Israel.
10 And Aaron and his sons shalt thou appoint, that they may keep their priesthood; and the stranger that draws near shall be put to death.
11 12 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel,

V. 9. *Or*, as subject they are given to him.

all his people are striving to be. For other thoughts on the typical character of Aaron, see on Ex. 4 : 27.

They shall minister to him. To him as High-priest, but not as a private person.

7. **His charge, and the charge of all the congregation.** Rev. T. E. ESPIN: "That is, so assist him that the obligations incumbent on him and on the congregation may be fulfilled."

Before the meeting-tent. They were not permitted to enter it; this was the sole privilege of the priests; hence their place was before it or near it. Occasional exceptions to the rule were permitted, when the duties of the priests became overwhelming, as sometimes at the great feasts, 2 Chron. 19 : 34; 35 : 14.

8. **They shall keep all the vessels.** It was theirs to bear these, together with the separate parts of the Tabernacle, when the people journeyed.

The charge of the sons of Israel. See on the kindred expression in ver. 7. The injunction is repeated here, that the Levites might be deeply impressed with a sense of their important duties.

9. **Aaron.** The High-priest.

His sons. Ordinary priests. The *sons* are mentioned so that the Levites might be ready not merely to aid the High-priest, but all the priests.

Wholly given. See on ver. 6. The service not being personal, but religious, was highly honorable.

Out of the sons of Israel. They were taken out of the nation, and set apart to a peculiar life.

10. **Shalt thou appoint.** The command had been given before, Ex. 28. The strictness with which Moses complied with it is evident from Lev. 8. Here the idea is not merely that of appointment to an office, but to its exclusive duties, as is evident from the next words.

That they may keep their priesthood. Not to be burdened with the other tasks of the sanctuary, such as the Levites were appointed to perform, and not to be interfered with by those who were not priests.

The stranger that draws near shall be put to death. These words have a twofold connection with the consecration of the Levites, who were, first, to so assist the worshipper that it would not be necessary for him to come within the forbidden grounds; and second, to constitute a guard around the sanctuary sufficient to protect it from intrusion, Num. 1 : 51; 18 : 22. The severity of this law was necessary in order to impress the people with the holiness of the Tabernacle, and, hence, of those things which it represented, and also in order to prevent such insurrections as that of Num. 16; see Num. 16 : 39, 40.

12. **I have taken.** These functions had been already assigned, Num. 1 : 47–50; but the time had now come for their actual assumption by the Levites.

Instead of all the first-born. The first-born then living, vers. 44–51. All the subsequent first-born seem to have been redeemed by a small payment to the support of the priesthood, Luke 2 : 23. From vers. 40–43; Ex. 22 : 29; Luke 2 : 23, it is inferred that the law applied only to boys.

instead of all the first-born that open the womb, out of the
13 sons of Israel; and the Levites belong to me. For to me
belong all the first-born: in the day when I smote all the
first-born in the land of Egypt, I consecrated to myself all

That open the womb. The first-born of the mother, whether the first-born of the father or not. It is probable from this that the first-born of Egypt who perished on the night of the Passover were those of the mothers. Some have supposed that the dedication of the first-born sons to God was but an extension of the right of primogeniture, by which they inherited the father's priesthood. But it was the first-born of the father, and not necessarily of the mother, who in the patriarchal age thus became priest in his stead. Nor was the mother's first-born, thus dedicated, considered a priest; rather he was considered a sacrifice to be redeemed with money. The parents were not only permitted, but required to pay the price. Hence, also, the Levites, their substitutes, were presented as an offering, Num. 8 : 10.

13. **In the day when I smote.** This assigns the reason for the sanctification of the first-born. See Ex. 13 : 1-15; 22 : 29, 30; 34 : 19; Lev. 27 : 26; Num. 3 : 13; 8 : 16, 17; 18 : 15; Deut. 15 : 19. Since the Israelite had been delivered from bondage by the death of the first-born of Egypt, it was but just that his own first-born son should be dedicated as a thankful memorial of his costly redemption.

Consecrated. Set apart from common to holy uses.

From man to beast. The first-born of both man and beast had been smitten in Egypt, Ex. 12 : 29. The cattle of the Levites were therefore taken in place of the existing first-born of cattle belonging to the other tribes, ver. 41. Rev. H. W. PHILLOTT: "The male first-born of animals was also devoted to God, Ex. 13 : 2, 12, 13; 22 : 29; 34 : 19, 20. Unclean animals were to be redeemed with the addition of one-fifth their value, or else put to death; or, if not redeemed, to be sold and the price given to the priests, Lev. 27 : 13, 27, 28. The first-born of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, or, if not redeemed, put to death, Ex. 13 : 13; 34 : 20; Num. 18 : 15. Of cattle, goats, or sheep, the first-born from eight days to twelve months old were not to be used, but offered in sacrifice. After the burning of the fat, the remainder was appropriated to the priests, Ex. 22 : 30; Num. 18 : 17, 18: Deut. 15 : 19, 20; Neh. 10 : 36. If there was any blemish, the animal was not to be sacrificed, but eaten at home." These regulations applied only to the male first-born.

They belong to me, to me, Jehovah. To me, whose gracious nature is represented by the name Jehovah. See on Ex. 3 : 4; 6 : 3.

In addition to the reason assigned in the text for the consecration of the Levites to the service of the sanctuary, we may assign (1) the prophetic curse of Gen. 49 : 7; (2) the admirable zeal of the tribe, Ex. 32 : 25-29; Deut. 33 : 9, 10, by which the curse was turned into a blessing; and (3) their fitness for the position as by far the smallest of all the tribes, Num. 26.

In the wilderness the duty of the Levites was severe, requiring the full strength of a man, as much of it consisted in bearing forward the Tabernacle and its furniture. Hence they were not to enter upon it till the age of thirty, Num. 4 : 23, 30, 35, and were to be exempt from the more difficult tasks at the age of fifty, Num. 8 : 25, 26. A part of the Tabernacle was indeed carried on wagons, Num. 7 : 1-9; but the more sacred vessels were borne upon the shoulders, Num. 7 : 9. At a subsequent period, when their duties were lighter, they entered upon them at the age of twenty, 1 Chron. 23 : 24-27. They continued to assist the priests in the service of the sanctuary; but they also assumed other duties of a higher order.

On the division of Palestine after the conquest, the tribe of Levi was assigned forty-eight cities, four in the territory of each tribe; eight of these belonged to the priests, and the remainder to the Levites in the strict sense. Thus diffused through the whole nation, their influence was everywhere felt. They were largely dependent for their support upon the gifts of the people, and as these gifts were abundant in periods of general piety, and meagre in periods of worldly greed, the Levites were naturally interested in the promotion of religion. On the revolt of the ten tribes, the northern kingdom sank into idolatry under Jeroboam and his successors; and most of the priests and Levites therefore withdrew to the kingdom of Judah, 2 Chron. 11 : 13, 14, where they acquired great favor. Their duties after the settlement in Palestine seem to have been so little exacting of bodily toil, that they gave themselves to the cultivation of learning and sacred music, 1 Sam. 10 : 5; 1 Chron. 24 : 6; 2 Chron. 34 : 13. Samuel was a Levite, and it is probable that the schools of the prophets which appeared in his time, 1 Sam. 10 : 5, were largely composed of members of this order. The Levites were employed as officers and judges under David, 1 Chron. 26 : 29. They were the agents of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah in their efforts to reform the people, 2 Chron. 17 : 8; 30 : 22. Under Josiah they were employed as teachers, 2 Chron. 35 : 3. After the Babylonish captivity they again appeared as

the first-born in Israel, from man to beast; they belong to me, to me, Jehovah.

teachers and instructors, Neh. 8 : 7. The organization of the synagogues after the return from Babylon, securing another means of popular instruction in the Law, rendered this part of their office less important; yet their influence did not wane. They contributed to the organization of the Great Synagogue; and with the priests formed a majority of the Sanhedrim, and hence had much to do with the administration of justice. It is probable that many of them became Scribes, learned copyists and expounders of the sacred books. They appear but seldom in the New Testament, unless, as is probable, they appear under the name of Scribes. They acted as delegates of the Sanhedrim in visiting John the Baptist, John 1 : 19. Barnabas and Mark were Levites. When a "great company of priests" accepted the Gospel, Acts 6 : 7, it is probable that the Levites, their assistants, also felt the mighty impulse, and that many of them became disciples. As an order, however, the Levites rejected Christ, in common with their nation. They were swept away at the destruction of Jerusalem, and they have never since been influential. Those Jews who bear the name of Cohen are supposed to be descendants of Aaron, and, hence, hereditary priests; those who are named Levita or Levy, are Levites; and the first-born of families bearing these names are exempt from the payment of redemption money, which is still required in the cases of others; but beyond this they have little distinction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. When God calls us to perform any duty, he provides all necessary assistance, vers. 6–9.

2. The church is no place for the indulgence of carnal ambition; and the Christian should be ready to do any service, however humble, for his divine Master, vers. 6–9.

3. The lowest service of God is highly honorable. The Levites, though called to a laborious position, acquired vast and controlling influence over the nation.

4. Christian ministers should not forsake the legitimate duties of their high calling to engage in worldly pursuits, ver. 10.

5. If the deliverance of Israel through the death of the Egyptian first-born gave God the right to all the first-born of Israel, surely the greater salvation, wrought by the death of his only-begotten Son, entitles him to all our souls and all our property, vers. 12, 13.

6. Let the teacher dwell specially upon the High-priest as a type of Christ, consulting carefully the notes on ver. 6.

7. Dwell also on the subordinate priests as not only types of Christ but as representing the Christian, consulting the same notes.

8. All Christians are now priests, the friends of God, privileged to draw near the throne of grace through the blood of Atonement, 1 Pet. 2 : 5, 9; Rev. 1 : 6; 5 : 10; 20 : 6. They may also plead that blood in behalf of both the penitent and the impenitent. The Christian minister is not distinguished above other Christians in this respect.

9. The superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of Aaron: 1. That of Aaron was temporary; Christ's is eternal, Heb. 7 : 23–25. 2. Aaron was less able to sympathize with the penitent than Christ, Heb. 5 : 1–9. 3. Aaron needed to sacrifice for his own sins; Christ was sinless, Heb. 7 : 26–28. 4. Jesus offers a more efficacious sacrifice than those of Aaron, Heb. 9 : 12–14. 5. Hence the sacrifices of Aaron were efficacious only as they pointed to the Lamb of God, being in themselves unable to take away sins, Heb. 10 : 1–17. 6. Aaron belonged to an imperfect and hence temporary dispensation; Jesus belongs to the reign of grace, Heb. 7 : 18–22; 8 : 6–13. Let us, therefore, come to God humbly, yet boldly, through Christ our great High-priest, Heb. 10 : 19–22.

LESSON XXI.—ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF. NUM. 14 : 1–10.

PARAN AND KADESH.

The departure of the Israelites from Sinai is recorded in Num. 10 : 33. Notwithstanding their recent penitence and their solemn renewal of the covenant, they repeatedly rebelled against God, Num. 11 : 1–3, 4–15. To influence them by moral forces, he appointed seventy prophets to instruct and restrain them, Num. 11 : 16–30. He also sent judgments upon the most incorrigible, thus, as ever, mingling mercy and justice, Num. 11 : 31–35. The spirit of rebellion, thus quelled among the people, broke forth where it was least anticipated. Miriam and Aaron threatened to head a revolt against the authority of Moses; and but for special divine interposition they would have done so, Num. 12. Miriam, as the leader, was severely punished until brought to repentance. The lesson finds the chosen but fickle people

at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, Num. 13 : 26. It was the farthest point which they reached in their direct road to the promised land : the Exodus terminated, strictly speaking, at Kadesh, and what are technically termed "the wanderings" began, Num. 13 : 3, 26; 14 : 29–33; 20 : 1; Deut. 2 : 14. The wilderness, whose original name of Paran, means *a place of caves*, is now termed by the Arabs *Bedu et Tih*, *the wilderness of wandering*, the melancholy fate of the rebellious nation having impressed it with a new name which has adhered to it ever since. It had for its boundaries Palestine on the north, Gen. 21 : 14, 21; 1 Sam. 25 : 1, 4, the mountain region of the Sinaitic peninsula on the south, Num. 10 : 12; comp. 10 : 33; 11 : 3, 34, 35; 12 : 16; Deut. 1 : 19, the mountains of Edom on the east, Gen. 14 : 6, and, probably, Egypt and the Mediterranean on the west. PORTER : "Paran was not strictly speaking 'a wilderness.' The sacred writers call it *Midbar;* that is, a pasture-land as distinguished from an agricultural country. Its principal inhabitants were nomads; though it had a few towns and some grain-fields." ROBINSON found, in some parts of it, "remains of long ranges of low stone walls, which probably once served as the divisions of cultivated fields," and very considerable vegetation. This vegetation, however, is scant during the heat and drought of summer, so that the Israelites termed the wilderness not only "great" but "terrible," Deut. 1 : 19. The central section, where the wanderings were chiefly held, is an undulating plateau, from six hundred to eight hundred feet in height. PORTER: "Fountains are rare, and even wells and tanks are far apart. The plateau rises considerably towards the northeast, and as deep glens descend from it to the Arabah, this section presents the appearance of a series of parallel ridges extending east and west. Their southern sides are mostly bluffs of naked white rock, which seem from a distance like colossal terrace walls." On the west the plateau terminates in a line of bare white hills, which descend towards the valley of the Arabah in steep slopes and rugged precipices, "averaging," says PORTER, "about a thousand feet in height, and everywhere deeply furrowed by wild ravines." "Through this wide region," he says in another place, "the Israelites marched, not in a straight line, but like the modern Arab tribes, from pasture to pasture; and it was when entering on that long and toilsome march that Moses said to Hobab, 'Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes,' Num. 10 : 31. Hobab was intimately acquainted with the whole wilderness. As a nomad pastoral chief he knew the best pastures and all the wells and fountains; and hence Moses was most anxious to secure his services as guide." The pillar of cloud and fire would indicate the proper position of the headquarters of the host, Ex. 40 : 36, 37, but not the best grounds for detachments of shepherds and herdsmen.

The Paran of Deut. 1 : 1 and 1 K. 11 : 18, which seems to have been a town, the Mount Paran of Deut. 33 : 2 and Hab. 3 : 3, and the valley of Paran in the wilderness of Judah, which Josephus mentions, were probably not in any way connected with the wilderness which we have described.

Kadesh, near which the Israelites were encamped, was probably the religious and civil capital of the surrounding district, for its name means the *holy, the holy place, the sanctuary;* and it is also called En-Mishpat, *the spring of judgment.* It is certain that the Scriptures know but one Kadesh; and that it is called indifferently Kadesh, Kadesh-barnea, or Meribah Kadesh. The spies went from Kadesh, Num. 13 : 26, and also from Kadesh-barnea, Num. 32 : 8; Deut. 9 : 23; Josh. 14 : 6, 7; and that Kadesh-barnea and Meribah Kadesh were the same is evident if we compare Ezek. 47 : 19; 48 : 28, where the Hebrew has Meribah Kadesh, with Num. 34 : 4; Josh. 15 : 3, and Deut. 32 : 51. The theory that there were two places named Kadesh is entertained only by those who forget that the Israelites were twice in the one locality, first at the period of the lesson, two years after the Exodus, and again thirty-eight years later, when the wanderings were about to cease, Num. 20 : 1. Their second visit seems to have been made in the hope of marching into Palestine by the most direct route, a hope which was frustrated by the hostility of Edom, Num. 20 : 14–22.

Kadesh was a city, Num. 20 : 16; Josh. 15 : 23; Num. 34 : 4. The name of the city was naturally given to the country around it, Ps. 29 : 8, in which the camp of Israel lay. The city is sometimes said to have been in the wilderness of Paran, Num. 12 : 16; 13 : 3, comp. 13 : 26; and again it is placed in the wilderness of Zin, Num. 13 : 21; 20 : 1; 33 : 36, because the wilderness of Zin was in the larger wilderness of Paran, including only its northern extremity.

Where was Kadesh? ROBINSON identifies it with the modern Ain-el-Weibeh, in the valley of the Arabah, about ten miles north of the foot of mount Hor. In this country and England the influence of ROBINSON has led to the general acceptance of this theory. It is encumbered, however, with great difficulties. 1. No remains of a city are found at Ain-el-Weibeh; but Kadesh was a city; see above. 2. No remarkable cliff is found near it, but there seems to have been one near Kadesh, Num. 20 : 7 ff. 3. No trace of the name Kadesh is found in the vicinity, which is strange, considering the early celebrity of the city and the length of time during which the Israelites made it their headquarters. Nor do the names of the other stations mentioned in Num. 33 occur near it. 4. PALMER rejects 'Ain-el-Weibeh from strategic considerations: "The children of Israel would have been confined, as it were, in a *cul-de-sac*, with the subjects of King Arad, the Amorites, the Edomites, the Moabites, completely hemming them in. A good general like Moses would not have chosen a bad position for so important a camp." 5. The Israelites were at Kadesh, expecting to march into Pales-

1 AND all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried
2 out; and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and all the congregation said to them: Would that we had died in the land of Egypt; or, would that we had died in

tine. From 'Ain-el-Weibeh, however, there is no good pass; it is admitted that all those which have been proposed are so extremely difficult that a handful of men could defend them against the most powerful army. FRIES: "On this side Canaan was naturally impregnable." So steep is the pass of Es Safeh, which ROBINSON supposes that the Israelites intended to take, that the Romans made steps in it to facilitate its use for commercial purposes. 6. Kadesh was near the mountain of the Amorites, Deut. 1 : 12, 19, 44, 46. But there is not the slightest evidence that the Amorites held the heights near 'Ain-el-Weibeh. The statement of Judg. 1 : 36, has been cited as evidence; but a comparison of Num. 34 : 3, 4, and Josh. 15 : 2, 3, will show that the Akrabbim of Judg. 1 : 36, near which the Amorites are said to have been, was far to the north.

Thirty years ago ROWLAND discovered the site of Kadesh; and while, owing to the influence of ROBINSON, his discovery is almost wholly ignored in England and America, it is as generally admitted in Germany. Near the Arabah, on its western side, rises a vast mountain, called the Azazamat, which runs far to the west and finally slopes off gradually towards the Wady-el-Arish. At the northwestern corner it is joined by lower mountains. Immediately south of these lower mountains and running into the heart of the Azazamat, is an extended desert plain, which is undoubtedly the wilderness of Kadesh, where the lesson finds the chosen people. Here is the rock, with its copious spring still bearing its ancient name. Abundant ruins are found in the district. The other names mentioned in the Scriptures in connection with Kadesh still linger in the vicinity. It is such a position as a military strategist called upon to face the foes of ancient Israel in the desert, would consider safe. It is near a practicable pass into Palestine. In the low mountains which run from the northwest corner of the Azazamat are localities still bearing as part of their names the word Amir, Ameri, or Amerin, directly derived from the ancient Amorites; here are therefore the mountains of the Amorites. The only plausible objection to this identification is based upon Num. 20 : 16, where Kadesh is described as "a city in the uttermost of the border" of Edom; upon Num. 33 : 37, where Mount Hor is said to be "in the edge of the land of Edom," and on Deut. 1 : 2, where the journey from Horeb to Kadesh is said to have been "by the way of Mount Seir." It is assumed that the Azazamat was not possessed by the Edomites, an assumption for which no writer has adduced valid proof. The statement that Mount Hor was "in the edge of Edom" is not at all inconsistent with the theory that Edom extended across the Arabah and embraced the Azazamat as a part of what was called Mount Seir, or the mountain possessions of Seir, as a glance at the map will demonstrate. It is acknowledged that the Azazamat belonged to Edom at a later date, and there is no evidence whatever that it was not in the possession of the Edomites thus early. The other objections to this identification of Kadesh scarcely merit examination.

1. The occasion of the extraordinary grief recorded in this verse, and of the violence which followed it, ver. 10, was the unfavorable report of the spies who had been sent into the promised land. See the preceding chapter. The Israelites had expected to effect an immediate conquest of Palestine; and now they deem it impossible.

All. The impulse was almost universal. This fact is recognized throughout the lesson, vers. 2, 5, 7, 10.

Lifted up their voice and cried out. In loud wailing, by which the masses of the Orientals are still accustomed to express their disappointment and sorrow.

The people wept that night. The anxiety of Moses and the few who stood firm during that terrible night is left to the imagination.

2. **Murmured against Moses and against Aaron.** Observe how one sin led to another; first, there was disappointment proceeding from unbelief in the promise and power of Jehovah, ver. 1, then murmuring against their divinely appointed leaders, ver. 2, then murmuring against Jehovah, v. 3, then the appointment of their own leaders, and the formal institution of a rebellious movement to return to Egypt, vers. 3, 4, and, finally, the determination to kill those who had brought a truthful report from the land, ver. 10. Had they committed this crime they would have proceeded further to kill Moses himself.

Would that we had died. When we give the reins to evil passions our words are apt to be not only sinful, but ridiculous.

3 this wilderness! And why does Jehovah bring us to that
land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our little
ones should be a prey? Were it not better for us to
4 return to Egypt? And they said one to another: Let us
appoint a head, and return to Egypt.
5 Then fell Moses and Aaron on their faces before all the
6 assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. And
Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, of those
7 who explored the land, rent their clothes. And they said

3. **Why does Jehovah bring.** After murmuring at Jehovah's ministers, ver. 2, they began to murmur at Jehovah himself.

That land. Palestine, to whose borders they had come.

To fall by the sword. They attributed to Jehovah the intention of leading them into Palestine in order to destroy them, notwithstanding all his assurances in both word and deed that he cherished for them the deepest love and the fondest designs. They made him a liar.

That our wives and our little ones should be a prey? Unbelief always tries to find some pious excuse for its opposition to God; and especially is it prone to plead humanity in opposition to religion, as if they were not one. He who founded the family in Eden was ready to care for it in the desert.

Better . . . to return to Egypt. Unbelief leads not only to sin, but to self-destructive folly. The return into Egypt would have been through a wilderness where they would have starved without such miraculous aid as they had hitherto received; and it would have led them into the power of a people whose rage at the memory of the Red Sea and the plagues would have known no bounds. The cruel spirit of antiquity would have demanded the torture and death of the returning and helpless fugitives.

4. **They said one to another.** Evil men mutually encourage one another in sin. We should avoid bad company, lest we should be thus misled.

Let us appoint a head. That is, a leader. They would thus depose Moses. We learn from Neh. 9 : 17, that the new leader was actually appointed.

And return. That which began as a mere suggestion, now became a plan of determined action.

5. Caleb had already endeavored in vain to quell the rising mob-spirit, Num. 13 : 30; and Moses had seconded his effort, Deut. 1 : 29 ff. But all was of no avail.

Fell....on their faces. In prayer to God. When they could no longer stem the rising tide, they resorted to him who is Almighty. See Num. 16 : 22. Prostration in prayer was customary only in cases of extreme feeling; standing was the ordinary posture; 2 Chron. 20 : 18; Ezra 10 : 1, comp. Ex. 33 : 10; 1 K. 8 : 14, 22; 1 Sam. 18 : 26; Matt. 6 : 5; Luke 18 : 11.

Before all the assembly. That the whole assembly might see their confidence in Jehovah, and know that the interposition which they expected to follow, came indeed in answer to prayer. Humanly speaking, it was a defenceless attitude; the people might have stoned them: but they knew in whom they trusted.

6. **Joshua.** See on Ex. 17 : 9.

Caleb. Probably a foreigner, but a proselyte to the true religion; Josh. 15 : 17. Judg. 1 : 13; 3 : 9, 11; Josh. 15 : 13; 14 : 14. He was a chief in the tribe of Judah. His faith in God is illustrated in the lesson. He was rewarded for it by being permitted to enter Palestine, and possess a large territory in it, ver. 30; Josh. chs. 14 and 15. We hear nothing further of him after his settlement in the promised land.

Rent their clothes. This was done by grasping the outer robe at the back of the neck, with both hands, and rending it downward. It was a customary mark of strong indignation, Acts 14 : 14, or of deep mourning, 2 Sam. 1 : 11; here it was dictated by both feelings. LANGE: "Originally it was simply a natural outburst of painful emotion. At a later period, when many of these outbursts were more theatrical than real, their exercise was regulated by special rules." The person was to stand while rending the garment; and the rent was to be about a span in depth. As a sign of mourning this action was prohibited by the High-priest, Lev. 10 : 6; 21 : 10; but he was probably permitted to thus express his indignation, Matt. 26 : 65.

to all the congregation of the sons of Israel: The land which we passed through, to explore it, the land is very, very good.
8 If Jehovah delight in us, he will bring us to that land, and give it to us; a land which flows with milk and honey.
9 Only rebel not against Jehovah; and fear not ye the people of the land; for they are our bread: their shadow is departed from them, and Jehovah is with us; fear them
10 not. And all the congregation said they would stone them

V. 10. *Or*, said they should be stoned.

7. **They said to all the congregation.** Loudly, so that all could hear.

Very, very good. This had been admitted in a lukewarm manner by the other spies, Num. 13 : 27. But it had not attracted the attention of the people so much as their other statements, that the heathen inhabitants were stronger than Israel, that many of them were giants, that the cities were impregnably walled, and that the whole country was so open to hostile invasions that human life was exposed to constant peril and perpetual war made necessary, Num. 13 : 32, comp. Lev. 26 : 38. Joshua and Caleb, sought, therefore, first of all, to paint the attractions of the country in strong terms.

8. **If Jehovah delight in us.** Their next point was the ability of Israel to conquer it. This ability they found not in the people, but in Jehovah who had led his children thus far in safety. Over against the bright prospect, however, they painted the possibility of defeat through the withdrawal of the divine favor. They placed all their hope in God; and their only fear was the fear of his displeasure, which was invited by the rebellious conduct of the people. The contrast between their unbelief and the sublime faith of Joshua and Caleb is most striking.

A land which flows with milk and honey. See on Ex. 3 : 8. The two faithful men shrewdly mingled with their words continual pictures of the delightful land which they desired the people to possess at once.

9. **Only rebel not against Jehovah.** This was the only danger.

They are our bread. With the help of Jehovah, we shall consume them, and their substance shall be ours.

Their shadow. Rev. T. E. ESPIN: "That is, their shelter, as from the scorching sun: an Oriental figure. See Isai. 30 : 2, 3; 32 : 2."

Is departed from them. We know not the nature of this defense, or protecting covert, whose shadow had been withdrawn. It may have been some foreign power whose alliance had ceased, or it may have been a condition of internal harmony among the many nations of Palestine, which had given place to dissension and war. Some circumstance in the political condition of the country is evidently referred to. We know from the Egyptian monuments that twenty-one years later the nations of Palestine were invaded by Egypt and greatly weakened, a providential preparation for the conquest by Joshua; and something analogous to this may have been discovered by the spies in the present instance.

Jehovah is with us. The weakness of the heathen is contrasted with the strength of Israel, whose helper was he who had already so often and so signally displayed his power and love.

10. **Said they would stone them.** This was the common method not only of executing criminals among the Israelites, Josh. 7 : 25; John 5 : 8, but also of expressing the murderous violence of the mob, Acts 5 : 26; 7 : 58. The custom arose from the character of the soil, which supplied an abundance of stones.

The glory of Jehovah. Some sudden outburst of dazzling light, which shone with a fierce and angry glow, bringing the riotous people at once to their senses. It came in answer to prayer, ver. 5, and just in time to preserve the lives of those who were most faithful. It is the purpose of God not merely to deliver his servants, but to do it in answer to prayer; hence the prayer as much as the deliverance is embraced in his plans for the future; and the two are so timed as to make their mutual relations evident.

In the meeting-tent. The appointed place of Jehovah's manifestations, where the cloud rested. The glory was probably the outshining of the light usually veiled in the cloud during the day, Ex. 13 : 21; 14 : 19, 20.

with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the meeting-tent to all the sons of Israel.

To all the sons of Israel. That all might see and be awed.

The people probably retreated at once to their tents; they seem from vers. 28 and 39 not to have heard the awful words which followed. the proposition to destroy and disinherit them and erect from the descendants of Moses a more obedient nation, ver. 12, a proposition which had once before been made, Ex. 32: 10. Now as then Moses rejected this blessing, and plead for Israel, vers. 13–19. In compliance with his intercession pardon was granted, ver. 20, with the prophecy, however, that the rebellion of the people should be punished, and with the enunciation of the ban which condemned them to wander thirty-eight years in the wilderness, until all the unbelieving ones had perished, and a better generation had arisen, vers. 21–39. The proposition of Jehovah to Moses represented his real feeling; see the remarks on Ex. 32: 10, at the close of Lesson XV. He knew, however, that Moses would intercede for the people, and that he would grant the petition of his servant; see the remarks on the timing of prayer and its answer on ver. 10. The people having gone to one extreme, in a spirit of carnal regret, which is quite different from godly sorrow, went next to the opposite; they sought to break the ban of Jehovah by a great show of obedience; their expedition, however, was an additional instance of disobedience, for it was directly forbidden. It was disastrous; and they returned to begin their long period of weary wandering, vers. 40–45.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. Most of our sorrows have no justification; they arise from want of faith in God and in anticipation of misfortunes which will never occur, ver. 1.

2. There are always croakers, who make it their business to represent the difficulties in the way of doing anything for Christ. They accomplish much mischief, discouraging where they should cheer. It is our duty to disregard them, and go boldly forward, confident of divine assistance, ver. 1, comp. Num. 13: 26–33.

3. When one sin is introduced to the heart, it brings in others; for sins march in troops; on ver. 2.

4. In moments of great excitement we should restrain our words; otherwise we shall be certain to utter that which is both wicked and foolish, and to regret our haste afterwards; on ver. 2.

5. When we criticise God's ministers in a malevolent spirit, we are almost ready to criticise God himself; on ver. 3.

6. Unbelief makes God a liar; on ver. 3.

7. The hypocritical excuses which unbelievers make for their want of faith; on ver. 3.

8. The evils of bad company; on ver. 4.

9. The folly of unbelief, which leads the soul to seek bondage, rather than freedom, ruin, rather than life; on ver. 4.

10. When we cherish a suggestion of sin, it is apt to grow into an outward life of sin; on ver. 4.

11. When we can do nothing more, there is always left to us the resource of prayer, a resource which will bring deliverance; on ver. 5.

12. We should feel sorrow for the unbelief and rebellion of men; and use the most earnest endeavors to turn them from their madness, vers. 6–9.

13. The only thing which we should fear is the displeasure of Jehovah, vers. 8, 9.

14. The hosts of sin seem mighty in the eyes of unbelievers; but those who trust in God know that they are utterly weak, vers. 8, 9.

15. Those who once give way to the suggestions of sin, will finally be led to do things from whose awful wickedness they would at first have recoiled in horror, ver. 10.

16. God is justly angry with unbelievers, vers. 10–12.

17. In Heb. 3: 7–14: 2 our lesson is referred to as an instruction to Christians, of whom Israel was a type; and they are warned against unbelief and wavering, which must exclude from heaven as the unbelief of the chosen people excluded them from the promised land. The same improvement of the lesson is made in Ps. 95.

18. While unbelievers perish, God's faithful children are preserved in answer to prayer, vers. 5, 10.

19. God has determined of old to deliver them; yet he has also determined that they shall pray for his help, thus establishing the relation between prayer and its answers; on ver. 10.

20. The wicked may be in the majority, but this does not justify them. The righteous may be few; but this does not prove them wrong. Nor will the numbers of the wicked be the means of their deliverance from the wrath of an offended God, vers. 1–12.

LESSON XXII.—THE SMITTEN ROCK. NUM. 20 : 7-13.

7 8 AND Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying: Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye to the cliff before their eyes, and it shall give out its water; and bring thou forth for them water out of the cliff, and give drink to the congregation and to their beasts.

9 And Moses took the staff from before Jehovah, as Jeho-
10 vah commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the cliff, and he said to them; Hear now,

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There were thirty-eight years between the event which formed the subject of the last lesson, and that which we are now to consider. Those years are almost a blank; the sacred writer has touched them but lightly; for the nation was under the ban of God, the covenant was in abeyance, and a new people, from the rising generation, were being trained for the conquest of the promised land. We conjecture that during most of the time the Israelites were dispersed in detachments through the wilderness for the purpose of procuring subsistence for themselves and their animals; and the emphatic statement of ver. 1 that the "whole congregation" assembled at its close, favors the inference. These years must have been marked by singular fatalities, as the whole generation of adults that came out of Egypt perished. And the fatalities were probably sent as miraculous judgments upon unbelief and sin, for had they been occasioned merely by the hardships of the wilderness they would have fallen equally upon both young and old, nor would they have tended so directly to the education of the children in a more obedient spirit than that which characterized the fathers. That the period was one of great declension or even of apostasy is probable from Ezek. 20 : 15 ff; Amos 5 : 25 ff; Hosea 9 : 10. The most that we know of it is contained in Num. 15 : 1-19 : 22; and Deut 1 : 46. We find the people reassembled at Kadesh, where they were in the previous lesson, Deut. 11 : 16; it is the fortieth year of the Exodus; the ban has nearly expired; and they have come together to complete the enterprise in which the former generation failed.

The immediate occasion of the miracle which forms the subject of our study is stated in vers. 2-6. At first there seems to have been sufficient water for all, ver. 1; but the dry season approached, and the springs failed. Crowded together in a narrow space, after having been accustomed to the larger scope of the wide wilderness, there was sharp suffering. God thus tried the new generation. It was better than that which preceded it; but it had learned from its fathers to murmur and rebel where it should have prayed.

7. **Jehovah spoke.** Out of the Tabernacle, ver. 6.

8. **The staff.** Not the staff which budded, Num. 17 : 5; but that with which the miracles in Egypt had been wrought, Ex. 7 : 8 ff., 19 ff.; 8 : 5 ff. It had been used at the battle of Rephidim as Jehovah designed it to be employed on this occasion, Ex. 17 : 5 ff.

Speak. The action was to be calm, majestic, and assured.

Cliff. The original word is different from that which is employed with reference to the "rock" in Horeb, Ex. 17 : 6.

9. **From before Jehovah.** That is, from the Tabernacle, where Jehovah dwelt, and where the staff, as the instrument of so many miracles, was naturally preserved.

As Jehovah commanded him. Observe how impartially the lesson states both the obedience and the disobedience of Moses.

10. **Gathered the assembly.** To witness the miracle and avail themselves at once of the water. Thus far the action of Moses and Aaron was in strict accordance with the divine command.

He. Moses. But he represented the feeling of Aaron; and spoke, probably, after consultation with his brother. See ver. 12.

Hear now, ye rebels. These words mark the first sin of the brothers. They were to address the cliff, ver. 8, and not the people. Moreover, the servant of God must not indulge in fretful anger and impotent scolding. The hasty and passionate words of Moses betrayed a temper which characterized the remainder of his conduct on this occasion. See on ver. 12. He had waited thirty-eight

ye rebels: shall we out of this cliff bring forth water for
11 you? And Moses raised his hand, and smote the cliff with his staff twice; and water came forth abundantly; and the congregation drank, and their beasts.
12 And Jehovah said to Moses and to Aaron: Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.

years for a new generation to arise. The promise of God, Num. 14: 13, had led him to expect in the children a better people than the fathers had been. But here, at their first assembly to march upon Palestine, they seemed to possess all the rebelliousness of those who had perished for their sins. It was a bitter disappointment. Moreover, Moses and Aaron had been slandered and abused, and their authority was set at nought; and their anger had, hence, the element of personal resentment.

Shall we. These words mark the second sin of the brothers. In his passion Moses forgot God; he failed to sanctify him in the eyes of the people, and spoke of the miracle as a sort of wonder which he and Aaron were about to perform, Num. 27: 14; Deut. 32: 51, 52; Ps. 106: 33. See on ver. 12.

11. **Smote the cliff.** This was the third sin of the brothers. They were commanded only to speak, not to smite. The rock in Horeb had been smitten, Ex. 17: 6; this miracle was not to be a mere repetition of the former. The disobedience rendered the interposition of God less obvious; the miracle may have seemed to some the result of magical power residing in the staff and wielded by him who bore it. He himself seems to have distrusted the efficacy of the words which he had been commanded to speak; he attributed a special efficacy to the staff. The yawning of the cliff at a word in the name of Jehovah, would have been a better presentation of the divine presence than the same result produced by blows in the name of the human being who gave them. Moreover, the blows were evidences of the petty personal anger of Moses and Aaron, an anger far removed from the divine indignation against wrong which becomes the saint, and which partakes the calmness, even as it does the sternness, of that God from whom it proceeds. See on ver. 12.

And water came forth abundantly. God's mercies are not always repressed by the infirmities of his saints. The waters of mercy, in revivals of religion, may sometimes, though they do not usually, flow when the professors and ministers of religion are unfaithful.

12. **Said to Moses and Aaron.** Both had partaken of one spirit of unbelief and violent irritation, though Moses alone was the active agent in the sins. Had Aaron not sympathized with the unseemly temper and the unbelief of Moses, he would have remonstrated against its exhibition, and thus checked it ere it had proceeded to great extremes.

Ye believed not in me. Unbelief is the root of all sin. It was the source of the evil in this instance, as the following observations demonstrate. 1. In order to obey God implicitly, we must believe that he is wiser and better than we, and hence that his will is rightly supreme over ours. The disobedience of Moses and Aaron therefore sprung from unbelief. 2. The first sin of the brothers, that of violent and outspoken irritation with wrong-doers, is checked by faith in the wisdom of God's purposes and in his power to effect them. Communion with God may impart a holy indignation, a zeal for his glory; but in so far as it does this, it will also overcome the feeling of personal irritation and spite which is cherished by those who think not so much of his glory as of their own. 3. The second sin, the unconscious and undesigned ascription of the miracle to the human agent, is a delicate index to the condition of those who committed it; for though it did not represent their fixed conviction and character, it expressed a forgetfulness of God which is incompatible with the reign of true faith in the soul. 4. The smiting of the rock shows that Moses and Aaron had a secret doubt of the efficiency of the mere word which they had been commanded to speak; they evidently attributed a power to the blows with the staff which had already been the means of so many wonders. They ascribed to it that which God alone possesses; and thus they turned themselves into magicians rather than workers of miracles. Perfect faith in Jehovah would have saved them from such a feeling, as also from its expression.

To sanctify me. To manifest my sacredness, my title to reverence and worship.

Ye shall not bring this assembly. The punishment was heavy; but the sins of those who stand in high positions are more conspicuous and misleading than the sins of others, and hence they deserve more conspicuous and severe rebuke. The punishment would tend to exhibit the sacredness

13 This is the water of strife, because the sons of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he was sanctified in them.

of Jehovah, which his ministers had concealed; and submission to it was the only means which they possessed of making amends for their grievous fault.

Other reasons for the severity probably concurred with the one mentioned in the text. Had there been no such record of the sin and its punishment, the Israelites might have been tempted in future years to deify those who had led them from bondage. The tombs of Miriam and Aaron were outside the Holy Land, that they might not be made the objects of idolatrous reverence; and in the case of Moses, even this precaution was not sufficient; the grave was not only in a foreign land, but in a spot which no man knew, Deut. 34 : 6. It is probable, also, that Moses and Aaron had served their people as long as their peculiar gifts allowed: there was to be a new era, and there must be a new man; the conquest of Palestine made it necessary that some one gifted, like Joshua, with pre-eminent genius for military affairs, should be elevated to the supreme command.

13. **This is the water of strife.** The water, it seems from this, continued to flow, and was named Strife, or, in Hebrew, Meribah. The place is termed "Meribah in Kadesh," Num. 27 : 14, and "Meribah-Kadesh" in Deut. 32 : 51; it is thus distinguished from the Meribah of Ex. 17 : 2 ff.

The sons of Israel strove. The name did not arise from the sin of Moses and Aaron, but from that of the people.

He was sanctified in them. For the meaning of the word *sanctified*, see on ver. 12. Though Moses and Aaron did not sanctify him, he was sanctified, partly by the miracle, and partly by the fearful sentence which he pronounced upon those who had failed to honor him as his agents and ministers.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. If we reject God, he will reject us; but he may accept our children, and so separate us forever from them. The fathers were not permitted to enter the promised land; but we behold the children about to become its possessors. How mournful the parting of the lost parent from the redeemed child!

2. When afflictions come, we should pray and not murmur, vers. 2–6.

3. How merciful is God, who even in the midst of our murmuring sends us deliverance, vers. 2–11. How much more quickly and largely would he bless us if, instead of murmuring at such times, we would engage in submissive prayer!

4. Observe the frankness of the Scriptures in recording the sins of the greatest saints, vers. 10–12. All uninspired books are partial to their heroes.

5. If the most eminent saints, who were inspired by the special presence of the Holy Spirit, had their grievous faults, let us not deem ourselves safe from temptation; rather, let us examine ourselves, and watch and pray, vers. 10–12.

6. The lapses of holy men of old are recorded for our comfort. Our imperfections should not cause us to doubt that God is able to save even such sinners as we, vers. 10–12.

7. While God may save even imperfect Christians, they shall be made to suffer for their sins, vers. 12. Every transgression brings a pang of conscience and a sense of alienation from God; and heaven, where there are degrees of happiness corresponding to the various attainments of its inhabitants, will be less delightful to those who are but scarcely saved.

8. The sins of those who profess to love God are specially worthy of punishment, since they attract attention and bring reproach upon the cause of religion, ver. 12.

9. So, also, the sins of those who occupy conspicuous positions in either the State or the Church, are specially heinous, as they constitute conspicuous examples which others are quick to imitate, ver. 12.

10. The servant of God must not strive; but with meekness he should oppose himself to the ungodly, ver. 10.

11. The holy indignation of one who is jealous for God and for justice is commendable; but the irritability of personal resentment is a sin, ver. 10.

12. Christian workers should not, for one moment, pride themselves on that which they do; let God have the glory; on ver. 10.

13. We should be careful to use just those means in the accomplishment of God's purposes, which he himself has sanctioned. Those who smite where he has only commanded them to speak, transgress his law and thus commit sin, ver. 11.

14. All sin proceeds from unbelief; on ver. 12. Unbelief is thus the one great sin for which all those who are lost shall be condemned.

15. When God's servants fail to sanctify him in the eyes of men, he will take his own means of being sanctified; on ver. 13.

16. The cliff is a type of Christ, whose side was rent to pour forth the blood from which we may gain life, 1 Cor. 10 : 4. Let the school, after the lesson, sing "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

LESSON XXIII.—THE SERPENT OF BRASS. NUM. 21: 4–9.

4 AND they broke up from Hor, the mountain, by the way

The events which intervened between the smiting of the rock, which formed the subject of the last lesson, and the erection of the brazen serpent were (1) The appointment of ambassadors to solicit from the King of Edom the privilege of passing through his territory, and his churlish and hostile refusal, Num. 20 : 14. (2) The journey to Mount Hor; the death of Aaron there, and the thirty days of mourning for him, and (3) The attack of Arad the Canaanite upon the Israelites, and the utter destruction of his power, effected probably at a later date, Num. 21 : 3; Judg. 1 : 16, 17.

4. **They broke up.** See on Ex. 15 : 22. The direct road to Palestine having been closed by the hostile attitude of Edom, Num. 20 : 20, 21, they were compelled to pass around the interdicted territory. The embassy of the Israelites and the threatening refusal of Edom to accede to its petition were permitted by God probably in order to bring the latter power into just judgment for its idolatry and immorality; for the memory of the indignity doubtless lingered among the former, and became a part of their martial ardor when the two were plunged into hostilities.

Hor. The name is applied in the Scriptures to two eminences. The situation of that mentioned in Num. 34 : 7, 8, is unknown; but it was quite distinct from the mountain of the text. The name is supposed to be the ancient form of *har*, the usual Hebrew word for *mountain*. It was probably given to the mountains which bore it by way of emphasis; their superior height caused them to be regarded as *the mountains* in an emphatic sense. Accordingly, the mountain which is by immemorial tradition, and by all travellers, identified with the eminence of the text, is the highest and most conspicuous of the Edomite range, its height being 4,800 feet above the Mediterranean, 400 feet above the valley of the Arabah, and more than 6,000 feet above the Dead Sea. It rises in N. lat. 30° 18′, E. long. 35° 33′, about midway between the two extremities of the mountains of Edom, at the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah. It was east of the valley of the Arabah, into which the Israelites had descended, Num. 20 : 22, and through which lay their long route to the Red Sea, Num. 21 : 4. It was on the boundary line of the land of Edom, Num. 20 : 23; 33 : 37. It was the first place at which the people halted for any length of time after leaving Kadesh, Num. 20 : 22; 33 : 37; but the march from the one to the other probably occupied several days. The long stay at Mount Hor was marked by one of the most sad events in the history of the wanderings, the death of Aaron, which led to thirty days of mourning.

The mountain is now called Jebel Haroun, Mount Aaron, in commemoration of the High-priest, who died upon its summit. STANLEY: "It is one of the very few spots connected with the wanderings of the Israelites which admits of no reasonable doubt. The mountain is marked far and near by its double top, which rises like a huge castellated building from a lower base; and on one of these is the Mohammedan chapel, erected out of the remains of some earlier and more sumptuous building, over the supposed grave of Aaron." The view which the High-priest obtained from the summit of Mount Hor, which was to him what Pisgah was to his greater brother, is well described by STANLEY. The country to the north was indeed partly obscured by haze; but we know from STEPHENS that the eye commands, when not thus hindered "the mysterious Dead Sea, gleaming from the depths of its profound basin," and of course a considerable extent of southern Palestine. STANLEY: "He looked over the valley of the Arabah, counterseected by its hundred watercourses, and beyond, over the white mountains of the wilderness they had so long traversed; and at the northern edge of it there must have been visible the heights through which the Israelites had vainly attempted to force their way into the promised land. This was the western view. Close around him on the east, were the rugged mountains of Edom, and far along the horizon the wide downs of Mount Seir, through which the passage had been denied by the wild tribes of Esau, who hunted over their long slopes. A dreary moment, and a dreary scene; such, at any rate, it must have seemed to the aged priest. The peculiarity of the view was the combination of wide extension with the scarcity of marked features and points on which to observe. Petra itself is entirely shut out of the intervening rocks, but the survey of the desert on one side, and the mountains of Edom on the other, is complete, and of these last the great feature is the mass of red bald-headed sandstone rocks, intersected not by valleys, but by deep seams. In the heart of these rocks, itself invincible, lies Petra. Beyond spreads the range of yellow downs, tufted with vegetation, now called Sherâh." IRBY and MANGLES: "But there is no part of the landscape which the eye wanders over with more curiosity and delight than the crags of Mount Hor itself, which stand upon every side in the most rugged and fantastic forms, sometimes strangely piled one on the other, and sometimes as strangely yawning in clefts of a frightful depth. An artist who would study rock-scenery in all its wildest and most extravagant forms, would find himself rewarded should he resort to Mount Hor for that sole purpose." The mountain presents in the distance a

of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom: and the

uniform mass of dark purple; but on a nearer inspection it is seen to be beautifully variegated with the gorgeous colors for which all the rocks near Petra are so famous.

By the way of the Red Sea. The Red Sea of the Exodus is the Gulf of Suez, which skirts one side of the Sinaitic peninsula; the Red Sea of the text is the Gulf of Akabah, which skirts the other side; see the introductory essay of Lesson X., and also on Ex. 13 : 18.

To go around. The Edomite mountains terminate at the head of the Gulf of Akabah; and the Israelites passed southward from Mount Hor down their western side; turned the southern extremity; and then skirted the eastern side as they went northward into the territory of Moab, opposite the promised land. Our lesson finds them on the western side of the mountains, not yet arrived at the sea.

Edom. A name which means *red*. It was given to Esau, the first-born son of Isaac, from the peculiar color both of his hair, Gen. 25 : 25, and of the pottage for which he sold his birthright, Gen. 25: 29–34. It was afterwards applied to the country which he and his descendants occupied. Possibly the aspect of the soil may have facilitated this transfer of the name. The country is sometimes termed the field of Edom, Gen. 32 : 3; Judg. 5 : 4, or the land of Edom, Gen. 36 : 13; Num. 33 : 37; but usually the country and its people are alike denominated simply Edom, Num. 24 : 18; Josh. 15; 1; 2 Sam. 8 : 14; 1 K. 11 : 14; and numerous passages in the prophets. Occasionally, however, the country is termed "Mount Esau," Obad. 8, 9, 19, 21, or simply "Esau," Jer. 49 : 8, 10; Obad. 6; and a kindred appellation is applied to the people, Deut. 2 : 4, 8; Obad. 18. The most common modern name of the country is *Idumæa*, the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Edom;* it is, however, quite rare in Scripture, Isai. 34 : 5, 6; Ezek. 35 : 15; 46 : 5; Mark 3 : 8. Hence, also, we know the ancient inhabitants as *Idumæans*.

Previous to the possession of the country by the descendants of Esau, it was known as Mount Seir, Gen. 32 : 3; 36 : 8, from Seir, the progenitor of the Horites, Gen. 14 : 6; 36 : 20–22, and perhaps in part because the name, which means *rugged*, was descriptive of its primitive aspect. The inhabitants were called *Horites*, from Hori, the grandson of Seir, Gen. 36 : 20–22, and perhaps partly because the name, which probably means *dwellers in caves*, was expressive of their habits. Their numerous excavated dwellings are still found in the sandstone-cliffs. They are perhaps alluded to in Job 30 : 6, 7. Their defeat by the Eastern kings is mentioned in Gen. 14 : 6; and their genealogy is given in Gen. 36 : 20–30 and 1 Chron. 1 : 38–42. The family of Esau was connected by marriage with them, Gen. 36 : 12, 20, 22, and this, when it became necessary for him to seek new pasturage for his flocks and herds, Gen. 36 : 6, 7, may have led him to visit Mount Seir, and finally to settle there, Gen. 32 : 3, 16. His descendants speedily attained power, and exterminated or absorbed the other inhabitants, having first, however, adopted their habits, Deut. 2 : 12, 22; Jer. 49 : 16; Obad. 3, 4.

The land of Edom was terminated on the north by the land of Moab, from which it was separated by the brook Zered, probably the modern *Wady el Ahsy;* on the south by the Gulf of Akabah, and on the east and west by bordering deserts; and these boundaries comprised a district about one hundred miles long by twenty broad. The territory was, however, at various times enlarged on the north and west by conquest. See the introductory essay of the preceding lesson. In the strict sense it was the southern end of that mountain range which stretches from the Gulf of Akabah beyond the northern limits of the Holy Land and forms the eastern water-shed of the Jordan; it extended from the Gulf of Akabah to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. It is thus wholly a mountainous region. The average elevation of the summits is about 2,000 feet above the sea.

Red and variegated sandstone is prominent, imparting to the mountains their striking colors. The whole country is characterized by irregular ridges and abrupt cliffs and deep ravines. The deep glens and mountain terraces are covered, however, with a generous soil, capable, under proper culture, of extreme fertility, thus fulfilling the prophetic blessing of Gen. 27 : 39. The rocky character of Edom is the subject of many Scriptural allusions, Judg. 1 : 36; 1 Chron. 25 : 11, 12; Obad. 1–4; Jer. 49 : 16; Ezek. 35 : 8. Hence, also, it was reckoned by the Greek geographers as a part of Arabia Petræa.

The capital of Edom was Bozrah, probably represented by the modern village of Buseireh; Gen. 36 : 33; Isai. 34 : 6; 63 : 1; Jer. 49 : 13, 22. Sela, or as it was called in Greek, Petra, was at one time, and perhaps always, the principal stronghold, 2 K. 14 : 7. The seaports were Eloth and Ezion-geber, on the Gulf of Akabah, 1 K. 9 : 26.

The hostility of Edom towards the Israelites was already marked at the time of the Exodus, Num. 20 : 15–21; 21 : 4; comp. Judg. 11 : 17 ff, and was avenged by Saul, 1 Sam. 14 : 47. David completely subjugated the Edomites, 2 Sam. 8 : 14; comp. 1 K. 11 : 15 ff; Ps. 60 : 2, 10. Solomon made use of their harbors, 1 K. 9 : 26, though vexed by their disposition to revolt, 1 K. 11 : 14–22. Thus the prophecies of Gen. 25 : 23 and Deut. 2 : 5 were both fulfilled, for while the Edomites served the children of Israel, Edom was held by the latter merely as a tributary nation, and not as a part of their own country, to be occupied as a possession. On the division of the Hebrew monarchy the Edomites con-

5 soul of the people was impatient on the way. And the
people spoke against God, and against Moses: Why have
ye led us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For
there is no bread, and no water; and our soul is weary
of this vile bread.
6 And Jehovah sent among the people the fiery serpents,

V. 6. *Or*, the poisonous serpents.

timued under the authority of Judah, 1 K. 22:49; 2 K. 3:9, 12, 26; comp. 1 K. 22:48; 2 K. 8:20, making many attempts at independence, 2 K. 8:20, 21; 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:11; 2 K. 14:22; 2 Chron. 25:11; 2 Chron. 28:17; 2 K. 16:6. They at length broke their yoke of servitude, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Gen. 27:40. They made common cause with the enemies of Judah, Ps. 137:7; Ezek. 35:5; 36:5; Obad. 10, 13 ff; for which they were denounced by the prophets, Jer. 49:8, 20; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 25:12 ff; Obad. 10, 13 ff; Ps. 137:7. As a reward, probably, for their assistance, they were permitted to occupy a portion of southern Palestine, Ezek. 35:10; 1 Mac. 5:65, and the whole plateau between it and Egypt. They were dislodged, however, about the same time from Edom proper by the Nabathæans. For four hundred years they flourished in their new possessions; but they were at length quite subdued by the Maccabees, and forced to turn from idolatry, 2 Chron. 14:15, 20, and accept the Jewish ritual. They were soon proud of their new religion, and though termed in contempt *half-Jews*, they became fanatical partisans of Judaism. Under Antipater and his descendants the Herods, Palestine was governed by an Idumæan dynasty; for though legally Jews, Deut. 23:8, they were of Edomite descent. The Edomites took sides with the Jews in their last vain struggle against Rome; and henceforth their name disappears. Their stormy and warlike history, Gen. 27:40, as well as the present desolation of their ancient home, are eloquent witnesses to the truth of prophecy, Jer. 49:8, 20; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 25:12 ff; Obad. 10, 13 ff; Ps. 137:7.

Impatient on the way. Rev. T. E. ESPIN: "Their course lay down the Arabah, between the limestone cliffs of the Tîh on the west and the granite range of Mount Seir on the east, until, a few hours north of Akabah, the wady Ithm opened to them a gap in the hostile mountains, and allowed them to turn to their left and to march northwards toward Moab, Deut. 2:8. They were thus for some days in the Arabah, a mountain plain of loose sand, gravel, and detritus of granite, which, though sprinkled with low shrubs, especially near the mouths of the wadys and the courses of the winter torrents, furnishes extremely little either of food or water, and is moreover often troubled by sand-storms from the shore of the gulf. Hence 'the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.'"

If it be asked why God permitted such continual hardships, it may be justly answered (1) that they constituted a discipline in faith and obedience for the new generation, without which it would have been no more fitted than its fathers to inherit the promised land; (2) that they schooled the people in the soldierly qualifications of endurance and hardihood, necessary to the wars on which they were about to enter; and (3) they wearied the people of their desert life and thus made them eager to undertake the conquest of a better country.

5. **The people spoke against God, and against Moses.** Their former murmurings at Kadesh had been treated leniently, and water had been supplied, apparently at their angry demand. They seem not to have interpreted the miracle there as an instance of mercy in spite of their wicked course, but as a response to it; and they therefore now repeated the experiment of insurrection. Thus men still "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," "not knowing that the long-suffering of God leads them to repentance."

This vile bread. The manna, sent expressly from God for their sustenance. JAMIESON: "The refutation of this calumny appears in the fact, that on the strength of this food they performed for forty years so many toilsome journeys."

The murmurs of the people are represented in 1 Cor. 10:9 as a tempting of Christ. HODGE: "Men are said to tempt God, when they put his patience, fidelity, or power to the test, Acts 5:9; Matt. 4:7; Heb. 3:9. It was thus the Israelites tempted him in the wilderness. They tried his forbearance; they provoked him." They tempted Christ; for Jehovah who led them was the second person of the Trinity, who afterwards came in human form to save us, John 8:58; 12:41; Heb. 11:26; Jude 5, Revised New Testament.

6. **Jehovah sent.** By providential guidance. He did not create the serpents for the occasion; but being already in the locality, they were permitted to attack those who, but for obstinate rebellion, would have been preserved from such dangers.

and they bit the people, and many people died out of Israel.

7 And the people came to Moses, and said: We have sinned; for we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee. Pray to Jehovah that he put away from us the serpent. And Moses prayed for the people.

8 And Jehovah said to Moses: Make thee a fiery serpent, and place it on a pole; and it shall be that every
9 one who is bitten shall see it and live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and placed it on the pole, and it came

V. 8. *Or*, poisonous serpent.
Ibid. *Or*, if he see it shall live.

The fiery serpents. So called either from the burning fever produced by their bite; or, more probably, from their color. BURCKHARDT represents the neighborhood as still infested with serpents: "The sand on the shore showed traces of snakes on every hand. They had crawled there in various directions. Some of the marks appeared to have been made by animals which could not have been less than two inches in diameter. My guide told me that snakes were very common in these regions, and that the fishermen were very much afraid of them, and put out their fires at night before going to sleep, because the light was known to attract them." SCHUBERT, writing of the same district: "In the afternoon a large and very mottled snake was brought to us, marked with fiery spots and spiral lines, which evidently belonged, from the formation of its teeth, to one of the most poisonous species. The Bedouins say that these snakes, of which they have great dread, are very numerous in this locality." The "fiery flying serpents" of Isai. 14: 29; 30: 26, were probably of the same sort, but represented poetically as "flying" on account of their swiftness, or the leap with which they struck their prey.

Many people died. God had been very patient and merciful at Kadesh when the people murmured. But patience has its just limits. As the recipients of mercy had abused it, turning it into an encouragement to sin, ver. 5, note, they were now met by justice.

7. **The people came to Moses.** This generation was more tractable than that which perished in the wilderness; it rebelled, in imitation of its fathers; but it was more quickly brought to repentance. A few such experiences as this reduced it to order, and prepared it to enter obediently and valiantly upon the conquest of Canaan.

We have sinned. Oh that all our sufferings might lead us to confess and forsake our sins.

Pray. They recognized Moses as the friend of God and the mediator between Jehovah and Israel. It is well to request the prayers of God's people that our sins may be forgiven.

Moses prayed. He had learned much by his experience at Kadesh; there was no anger or violence now in his treatment of the people.

8. **Make thee, etc.** The brazen serpent and the use to which it was applied were the thought of God and not the invention of Moses.

9. **A serpent of brass.** Colored, probably, in imitation of the serpents whose ravages were so fatal; hence it is called in the preceding verse "a fiery serpent." There were many among the Israelites who understood the art of working in metals, as is demonstrated by the construction of the Tabernacle.

Placed it on the pole. That it might be seen by all in every part of the camp.

Looked at the serpent of brass ...lived. Through the miraculous power of God, granted to those who had sufficient penitence and faith to look upon the brazen symbol.

We are told in 2 K. 18: 4, that the brazen serpent which Moses made was preserved till the time of Hezekiah, that it became an object of idolatrous worship, and that Hezekiah destroyed it by breaking it in pieces.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. There are many discouragements on the road to heaven, ver. 4; but on the road to hell they are more numerous. The Christian enjoys far more and suffers far less, even in this life, than the sinner.

2. When God blesses a sinner in spite of his rebellion, how prone the sinner is to turn the blessing into an encouragement of his rebellion; on ver. 5.

to pass, if the serpent bit a man, and he looked at the serpent of brass, that he lived.

3. This also explains why God does not usually bless a backslidden Christian or a cold-hearted Church with great success in even the holy work of saving souls: the blessing would probably be interpreted as a divine sanction of sin.

4. When we thus abuse God's mercy, he deals with us in justice. He may be patient with the impenitent sinner for a time; but punishment will come at last; on ver. 6.

5. All the hurtful things of nature are under the control of God, ver. 6.

6. The people who had spoken injuriously of Moses confessed their sin to him, ver. 7. When we have wronged another, we should seek to repair the injury as far as is possible. In many cases it is our duty to confess our sin to him, and ask his pardon. This, however, is not always necessary; and in many instances it may be hurtful, as it may create scandal, and perhaps involve the reputation of others, whom, even though we know that they have sinned, we have no right to injure in such a way. Before confessing our faults to man, we should carefully consider the probable effect of the confession.

7. It is well to ask the prayers of God's people, ver. 7.

8. We should ever pray for those who despitefully use us, ver. 7.

9. The chief attention of the class should be directed to the way of salvation as illustrated in the lesson. 1. The rebellious Israelites represent rebellious sinners. 2. The death which was inflicted upon them represents the penalty which the incorrigible sinner must meet. The teacher should not represent the fiery serpents as images of sin or of Satan, but as simple administrators of the divine justice. 3. In the emergency of the people, when it seemed that no power could deliver them, God provided a remedy. The brazen serpent represented Christ in that (*a*) It was a remedy such as man would not have thought of. The victim of the poisonous bite instinctively desired to be saved by his own efforts, or failing in this, by the skill of some famous physician or the efficacy of same potent drug. So the impenitent sinner desires to save himself by his own effort, or to be saved by the might of some human agency; hence the prevalence of self-righteousness, the wide acceptance of human traditions, the effort to win safety by works of morality, by penances and mortifications, or by the fancied influence of rites and ceremonies. The remedy which Infinite mercy provides is far other than these. (*b*) The brazen serpent was the most repulsive form to those who had been bitten and poisoned by the hateful object which it was made to resemble. Yet, in no other way than by gazing upon that symbol, so repugnant and even dreadful, were the dying restored. KURTZ: "An opportunity was thereby afforded to the believing Israelite to become familiar with the idea that an image of what was repulsive to the natural man might become in the hands of God a sign of salvation to the spiritual and believing man, in order that when at some future day the man who was made a curse, and hung as a malefactor upon the cross, was set before him and proclaimed to be the Redeemer of the world, he might not be offended." A crucified Christ, a Nazarene Saviour, has always been a stumbling-block to the natural heart, 1 Cor. 1: 23. (*c*) As the brazen serpent was lifted up, that it might be the sign of salvation, so Christ was crucified upon the cross that he might redeem our souls, John 3: 14, 15. (*d*) The brazen serpent was uplifted that all might gaze upon it. So also Christ was uplifted on the cross not only to bear our sins but also to attract the attention of the whole world, John 12: 32. Had he died a natural death he would have found the place of a good man in our esteem; but he would not have riveted all eyes. (*e*) It was only as the serpent was thus gazed at when uplifted that it was made the symbolical medium of healing; both before and afterwards it was mere inert brass. And it is by apprehending Jesus as crucified that the soul is saved. If we reject his cross, our acceptance of all the other truths of the Gospel cannot deliver us from death. 4. Such was the remedy. How was the dying Israelite to avail himself of it? (*a*) The offenders were penitent, ver. 7. It is necessary for us to repent of our sins if we would be saved. (*b*) They had faith to believe that the remedy would prove effective, else they would not have looked toward it when bitten. We must believe that God is able and willing to save us through the victim of the cross. (*c*) They actually looked, in penitence and faith, at the brazen serpent, availing themselves thus of the provision of mercy. So it is not enough for us to be sorry for our sins and to believe abstractly in the efficacy of the Atonement; we must decide to avail ourselves of it and to comply with its terms. A practical determination is required. The serpent might have been in its place, the dying man might have felt sorrow for his transgression, he might have fully believed in the divine promise of life, yet if, through shame, or obstinacy, or dislike of the repugnant form of the brazen serpent, or any other cause, he had refused to look at it and thus invoke the promise of Jehovah, he must have died. (*d*) The dying man could do nothing to save himself, nor could others aid him. Had he delayed, before looking at the serpent, in order to grow better, or to make himself better, or to be assisted by human means, he must have died. So we must come to Jesus just as we are, waiting for no fitness. He will justify and sanctify the soul; and thus to him shall belong the glory of our salvation forever.

LESSON XXIV.—THE TRUE PROPHET. DEUT. 18: 9–18.

9 WHEN thou comest into the land which Jehovah thy
God gives thee, thou shalt not learn to do according to the
10 abominations of those nations. There shall not be found
with thee one that makes his son and his daughter to pass
through the fire, one that practises sorcery, a magician, or

V. 10. *Or*, practises sorcery, drawing signs from clouds, and from serpents, or a conjurer.
The specific meaning of several Hebrew words used to express different modes of divination cannot now be determined beyond question; and even when it can be determined proper English equivalents are sometimes wanting.

The book of Deuteronomy, from which the lesson is taken, together with the two which follow, is the latest of the five which Moses wrote. The name means *a repetition of the law;* it was conferred in recognition of the large space occupied by the writer in rehearsing the most important features of the Sinaitic legislation. This rehearsal is in the form of addresses which Moses seems to have delivered, on three separate occasions, in the country of Moab, on the opposite side of the Jordan from the promised land; Deut. 1 : 5; Num. 33 : 48. These addresses occupy chs. 1–30. They are succeeded by four chapters containing an account of the Great Lawgiver's final words and deeds, and of his death and burial.

In the preceding lesson we left the Israelites painfully toiling around the southern end of the Edomite mountains. They at length reached the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho, Num. 22 : 1, where they remained long, and where the present lesson finds them. They did not repeat their rebellion; the judgment of the fiery serpents seems to have proved effectual. Their readiness to accept the rebuke and profit by it proves that they were more teachable than their fathers had been. On the way they destroyed two kings or chieftains, Sihon, king of the Amorites, Num. 21 : 21–30, and Og, king of Bashan, Num. 21 : 33–35. It was after their arrival at the encampment opposite Jericho that Balak, with the aid of Balaam, sought their destruction, Num. chs. 22–25, a hostility most fearfully punished, Num. ch. 31. The territory subdued in the wars against Sihon, Og, and Balak, was given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with half the tribe of Manasseh, Num. ch. 32.

9. **When thou comest into the land.** The words held out no distant hope; the land was in sight on the opposite side of the Jordan, and preparations for its occupation were even then being made.

The abominations. The immoralities of the ancient heathen were such as no pen can describe. It is evident from the Old Testament that those who inhabited Palestine were celebrated for their corruptions, even in a fearfully corrupt age, Lev. 18 : 1–30. It was on account of these that they were destroyed.

10. **Pass through the fire.** To Moloch. The name of this deity means literally *the king.* His worship originated with the Ammonites, the degenerate descendants of Lot, 1 K. 11 : 7, and was widely extended in Palestine. He seems to have been the representative of fire, or the sun. It has been questioned whether the children who were made to pass through the fire were actually consumed, or whether they usually escaped with some supposed benefit, such as that of purification by fire. But the allusions in the Bible to their actual slaughter are too plain to be evaded, 2 Chron. 28 : 3, comp. 2 K. 16 : 3. See also Ps. 106 : 37, 38; Jer. 7 : 31; comp. Jer. 19 : 5; Deut. 12 : 31; Ezek. 16 : 20, 21; 23 : 37. The phrase *to pass through the fire* seems to have been a poetical gloss of the horror, representing the soul of the child as ascending through the flame to the celestial abode of the god. We know not how the children were burned, the tradition of the Rabbins that Moloch was worshipped under the form of a hollow brazen idol with the head of an ox and with hands stretched forth as if to receive gifts, that the image was heated, and that the babe was placed in its fiery arms to die, has but a frail support. Rev. S. CLARK: "The practices of Moloch-worship appear to have been essentially connected with magical arts, and probably also with unlawful lusts, Lev. 20 : 5, 6; 18 : 20, 21; 2 K. 17 : 17; 21 : 6; 2 Chron. 33 : 6; Ezek. 23 : 37, and with some particular form of profane swearing, Lev. 20 : 3; 18 : 21; Zeph. 1 : 5." Their connection with magical arts may explain their association in the lesson with sorcery, etc.

Sorcery. The original word seems to be generic, referring to all secret arts. The several terms which follow relate to particular branches of sorcery, all of which are prohibited. Moses uses a long

11 a diviner, or a conjurer, or one that binds with spells, or
that inquires of a spirit, or a wizard, or one that seeks
12 unto the dead. For, an abomination to Jehovah is every
one that does these things; and because of these abomina-
tions, Jehovah thy God dispossesses them before thee.
13 Perfect shalt thou be with Jehovah thy God. For these
14 nations whom thou shalt dispossess hearken to magicians,
and to sorcerers; but thou—not so has Jehovah thy God
given to thee.

array of words in reference to this crime, because he would condemn it as a whole, and in each of its separate branches, leaving no possible opportunity for any one to mistake or evade his requirement. In most of these instances we are unable to determine the exact meaning of the Hebrew, because Eastern sorcery has decayed. See the marginal note of Dr. BLISS above.

Serpent-charming was a prominent feature of ancient Oriental sorcery, see on Ex. 7 : 22; and serpent-charmers still exist in the East, transmitting their art to their sons, so that they form a sort of hereditary guild. Such has probably been their constitution from the earliest times; and the order thus directly represents those who withstood Moses before Pharaoh, Ex. 7 : 10–13. The serpent-charmers certainly have the skill to render scorpions and poisonous serpents innocuous, chiefly by the influence of music, but also by the use of other means, of which we are wholly ignorant. It has been supposed that the modern serpent-charmers are mere tricksters, extracting the poisonous fangs before handling the objects of their art. But the most careful investigation, by such men as BRUCE and Dr. DAVY, has demonstrated the contrary.

The other features of ancient Oriental sorcery have perished or have been transmitted in less perfect forms.

It is remarkable that the sacred writers never even hint that the arts of sorcery are mere trickery; they take a more profound view of the subject. See on Ex. 7 : 22; and also Acts 16 : 16–24 : 19; 18–20.

12. **An abomination to Jehovah.** No stronger language of abhorrence can be used. The following observations will enable us to account for its vehemence: 1. The sorcerer was assisted by evil spiritual powers, with whom he sought connection, and to whom he abandoned himself. These powers, having often an intelligence superior to that of man, were able to perform many wonders before the eyes of their deluded votaries. See on Ex. 7 : 22. 2. Sorcery was intimately connected with idolatry; the temple had its oracle; the god was supposed to communicate its will through those whom Moses here condemns; and their utterances were uniformly in the supposed interests of the satanic kingdom which they served. 3. There was much of human trickery in the arts of sorcery; the sorcerer, having abandoned himself to the influence of evil natures, was none too honest to help the ignorance and weakness of the spiritual beings who assisted him by sleight of hand, by ventriloquism, and possibly by mesmerism. 4. The professors of secret arts, thus debased, facilitated crime in many ways, studying the preparation of deadly poisons and hurtful potions which they sold to the wicked beings who sought their assistance. They became, in fact, the prime ministers of Satan, the means of universal corruption.

13. **Perfect.** This is the divine standard. God's law, unless it should become unholy, can require of us nothing less than absolute sinlessness; and the child of God should ever strive to attain this excellence. He will not accomplish his desires in this life: but the earnest endeavor should nevertheless be made; for (1) those whose standard is high make greater progress than others, even though still affected with faults and sins; (2) those whose standard is thus high are driven to Christ by every failure to reach it; and (3) we have an advocate with the Father who is pleased to have us approach him, not only striving after conformity to his character, but with such a consciousness of our shortcoming as our failures tend to impart, so that the struggle for moral perfection brings not only victory over many temptations, but the delightful sense of pardon when our weaknesses have hindered our efforts.

14. **Not so has Jehovah thy God given to thee.** Other gods gave in this deceptive and destructive manner; but Jehovah gave more sincerely, and for the higher interests of the recipients. The following verses describe his gift, and contrast it with the sorceries of the heathen.

Notwithstanding this prohibition of sorcery, and the severe penalties elsewhere attached to it, Ex.

15 A prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like me, will Jehovah thy God raise up for thee ; to him shall

22 : 18 ; Lev. 19 : 26 ; 20 : 27, the Israelites were ever prone to cultivate the forbidden arts. Saul suppressed them for a time ; but yielded to their fascinations in his last hours, 1 Sam. ch. 28. Josiah again prohibited them, 2 K. 23 : 24. But they were prevalent during a great part of Israelitish history, as we learn from the prophets, Isai. 2 : 6 ; 8 : 19 ; 19 : 3 ; 29 : 3, 4 ; Micah 3 : 6, 7, 11 ; Jer. 14 : 14 ; 23 : 25 ; 27 : 9, 10 ; 29 : 8, 9 ; Ezek. 13 : 17 ff. ; Zech. 10 : 2. It is certain that during the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were addicted to sorcery ; for LAYARD has found in the ruins of Babylon remains of pottery still bearing the Hebrew inscriptions of magical formulæ by which the owners were supposed to accomplish their desires. After the return to Palestine most of the educated Jews abandoned these arts ; but they were cultivated by wandering tricksters, such as Simon Magus, Bar-Jesus, and the exorcists of Acts 19 : 13–20.

Are we bound to obey the law of Moses concerning secret arts ? Evidently, certain features of that law, as, for example, the penalties which it provides, were adapted only to the Old Dispensation ; they were not designed to be perpetual. While we thus discover that we cannot always accept the civil law of Moses as our rule of practice, we should also acknowledge that those things which it condemns are repugnant to the divine will, and should be avoided by us, not because they are forbidden in a code which was not designed for modern nations, but because they are "abominations to Jehovah." We should therefore avoid all fortune-tellers, astrologists, and mediums. 1. It can do us no possible good to consult them. 2. They are usually very wicked ; and it is dangerous to place ourselves in contact with such persons. 3. They are often hired by evil men to entice giddy and inexperienced persons from the path of morality and religion. 4. The habit of consulting them is one which becomes both tantalizing and fascinating, so that, without satisfying the reason, it lays hold of the heated fancy, until the visitor is not only a voluntary dupe, but too often a wretched victim. 5. It may be granted that in some instances mediums have intimacy with spirits ; but from the nature of the communications and the effects which they produce, it must be decided that the spirits, if such they are, belong to that realm of darkness which makes the ruin of souls its chief pursuit. 6. By their fruits ye shall know them. While we except from condemnation such exhibitions of legerdemain and ventriloquism as may be designed to amuse or to demonstrate the deceptions of those who profess to exercise secret spiritual powers, and also such investigations of these mysteries as may be necessary for scientific purposes, we may point to the lunatic asylum, the ruined family, and the cemetery, as affording terrible testimony of the dangers attending all forms of modern sorcery.

15. The writer now turns to that true Prophet whom Jehovah should give his people instead of the false prophets of heathenism, who were also usually sorcerers.

A prophet. The original word means *one who speaks under the impulse of divine inspiration* The prophet, according to the popular conception, was one who foretold future events ; but no such idea is necessarily conveyed by the Hebrew term. The prophet was the interpreter of God in the broadest sense, whether he rebuked the iniquities of the present, or foretold the events of the future ; see Ex. 7 : 1, where Aaron, as the interpreter of Moses, is called his prophet. The prediction of future events was but one characteristic of many which distinguished the prophetic office.

The employment of the singular, *prophet*, instead of the plural, *prophets*, is a proof that the passage refers primarily to Christ and only secondarily to the prophetic order whose members were his types. Further evidence that Christ is the subject will be found in Acts 3 : 22 ff. ; 7 : 37 ; Luke 24 : 27 ; John 1 : 21, 45 ; 4 : 25 ; 5 : 45–47.

From the midst of thee. Not imitated or borrowed from other nations, like the false prophets.

Of thy brethren. Jesus was an Israelite. Perhaps also the reference is to his perfect humanity.

Like me. This is a second proof that the passage relates primarily to our Lord and not to the prophetic order ; see Deut. 34 : 10–12, where it is expressly stated that the members of the prophetic order in Israel were not like Moses.

In what respect was Moses a type of Christ. 1. He was the mediator through whom God spoke to his people, as Christ is the Word, the utterance of the divine mind to men and perhaps to all the universe. Both were interpreters of God ; see the definition of the word *prophet* above : but Christ was the perfect interpreter. 2. Moses was the Mediator through whom the Israelites presented their requests to God, as we present ours through Christ, Ex. 19 : 8. 3. Moses manifested a Christlike disposition in offering his life for the people, Ex. 32 : 32. 4. He delivered the people from a temporal bondage as Christ delivers his from the bondage of sin. 5. Moses was frequently rejected by his people ; and Christ was rejected and crucified. 6. The high honor which Moses attained as the prophet, priest, lawgiver, and ruler, was the shadow of the exaltation of Christ as the Head of the Church. 7. But we

16 ye hearken; according to all that thou didst ask of
Jehovah thy God, in Horeb, in the day of the assembly,
saying: I will not again hear the voice of Jehovah my
God, and this great fire I will not see any more, lest I die.
17 18 And Jehovah said to me: They have well spoken; I will
raise them up a prophet from the midst of their brethren,
like thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he
shall speak to them all that I shall command him.

should also contrast Moses, the mediator of the law, and Christ, the mediator of grace, John 1 : 17; Moses, the servant in the house, and Christ, at once the builder and the ruler of the house, Heb. 3 : 1-6.

To him shall ye hearken. These words constitute a third proof that the passage refers to Christ; comp. Matt. 17 : 5; Mark 9 : 7. *To hearken* is *to hear with attention and obedience.*

16. **Horeb.** The district in which Mount Sinai was situated.

According to all that thou didst ask. Ex. 20 : 18-21; Heb. 12 : 19.

The day of the assembly. One of the most memorable in the history of Israel; see Ex. 19 : 10-18; Deut. 4 : 10.

I will not again. The speech of the people has the form of a positive declaration; but it was uttered in a reverent and prayerful spirit; for Jehovah approved it, ver. 17; and it is termed a request: *according to all that thou didst ask.*

Lest I die. From vers. 17 and 18 we learn that it was in answer to this request that the promise of Christ was given. Christ, therefore, not only reveals God, but, in revealing him, so mediates between us and the awful flashings of his justice that we die not. The terrors of Sinai give place to the sacrifice of Calvary; and hence we live.

17. **Jehovah said to me.** This communication was thus made to Moses on Sinai. Nothing is said about it in Exodus: and it is almost the only specimen which we possess of those wondrous truths revealed to the mediator of the Old Covenant during his solitary communion with Jehovah in the secret recesses of the mountain.

18. **He shall speak to them all that I shall command him.** Moses had failed in at least one instance to speak all that God commanded, Num. 20 : 7-13; the obedience of Christ was perfect. For the exact fulfilment of the prediction, see John 7 : 16-18; 8 : 28, 38. Of course it cannot refer primarily to the prophets as an order, for they represented the thought of God even less perfectly than had Moses, 1 K. ch. 13; Jonah 1 : 3.

But while the whole passage thus refers chiefly to our Lord, it may also refer in a secondary sense to the prophetic order in Israel, inasmuch as every true prophet was a type of Christ. Hence it occurs amidst a series of laws concerning the orders of Hebrew rulers, and contrasts the true prophet with the false sorcerers of heathenism. It is thus like the Messianic Psalms, which refer to David or Solomon, but find their perfect fulfilment only in Him of whose glory that of David and Solomon were but feeble foreshadowings. Many prophecies have what Bacon terms "springing and germinant accomplishments."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. When we seem to be on the eve of a great prosperity, we should prepare our hearts by special religious meditation and resolution to resist the blandishments of fortune, ver. 9.

2. The evils of fortune-telling and so-called spiritualism; on ver. 10. Let the teacher be careful, in speaking of this subject, not to awaken curiosity and interest such as may lead to the very result which his instruction is designed to prevent.

3. The obligation of every soul to strive after moral perfection; on ver. 13. When we are convinced that we cannot obtain it by our own efforts, let us seek pardon through the blood of Jesus, and the sanctifying grace which that blood procures.

4. Jesus as a prophet, expressing the nature and will of God to man, ver. 15.

5. It is our duty to hearken to him; on ver. 15.

6. It is Jesus only who prevents our destruction by awful manifestations of divine justice; on ver. 16.

7. Let the teacher dwell upon the character and offices of Christ as presented typically in the life of Moses; on ver. 18.

LESSON XXV.—THE DEATH OF MOSES. DEUT. 34: 1–12.

1 AND Moses went up from the desert-plains of Moab upon the mountain Nebo, the head of Pisgah, which is before

V. 1. *Desert-plains:* so we uniformly render the peculiar topographical designation by which the Hebrew invariably marks the great expansion of the arid waste (the Arabah) which borders the lower Jordan. That portion which lies east of the river is the desert-plain of Moab; on the western side was the desert-plain of Jericho.

1. **Moses went up.** The camp was situated in the deep depression of the Jordan; see the next note.

The desert-plains. GROVE: "Before the invasion of the Ammonites the territory occupied by Moab divided itself naturally into three distinct and independent portions. Each of these portions appears to have had its name, by which it is almost invariably designated. (1) The enclosed corner or canton south of the Arnon was 'the field of Moab,' Ruth 1: 1, 2, 6, etc. (2) The more open rolling country north of the Arnon, opposite Jericho, and up to the hills of Gilead, was 'the land of Moab,' Deut. 1: 5; 32: 49, etc. (3) The sunk district in the tropical depths of the Jordan valley, taking its name from that of the great valley itself, the Arabah, *the waste*, was the Arboth Moab, the dry regions, in the Common Version very incorrectly rendered 'the plains of Moab,' Num. 22: 1; Deut. 34: 1." E. T. ESPIN: "Near the mouth of the Jordan this tract is about eleven miles across, a breadth of from four to five miles being on the eastern bank. The space occupied by the Israelitish camp consisted, in the main, of a large and luxurious oasis upon this bank, slightly raised above the barren flat, sultry because sheltered by the Peræan hills which bear up the fertile plateau above, and watered by the brooks which, descending from those hills, run westward across the plain into the Jordan." The position of the camp is determined from Num. 33: 49. The Valley of the Jordan was called "waste," not because under cultivation it proved unproductive; but rather, because, sunken between mountains, and always hot, it required irrigation before it ceased to present the appearance of a desolation and broke forth into the fertility which under proper care characterized it.

Of Moab. Only a part of the valley, extending from the Dead Sea perhaps fifty miles upward, was in the hands of the Moabites.

Moab, whose name may mean *from the father*, was the eldest son of Lot, Gen. 19: 37. His descendants seem to have gradually pushed out the aboriginal inhabitants east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, and to have possessed a rich country perhaps fifty miles in length from north to south and stretching back from the Jordan eighteen or twenty miles. The near kinship of Moab and Israel, Gen. 11: 27, 31; 12: 4, disposed the latter to the utmost courtesy, Deut. 2: 8, Judg. 11: 17, 18, which, however, was not reciprocated, Judg. 11: 17; Deut. 23: 3, 4; Num. 22: 2–4; 25: 1. A little while previous to the approach of Israel the warlike Ammonites had driven Moab from his northern possessions and behind the Arnon, Num. 31: 27–30. This country the Israelites conquered in turn, Judg. 11: 19–22. The subsequent relations of Israel and Moab were at times friendly, at times hostile, Judg. 3: 12–30; 1 Sam. 11: 14, 47; 22: 3, 4; 2 Sam. 8: 2; 1 Chron. 18: 2; 1 K. 11: 1, 7, 33; 2 K. 3; 2 Chron. 20: 1–30. The hostility of Moab to the chosen people called upon him the denunciations of the prophets, Isai. 15: 16; 25: 10–12; Jer. 48; Zeph. 2: 8–10. Though the Moabites recovered from the repeated blows inflicted upon them, and long flourished in prosperity, the word of God is fulfilled; their land is a desolation; and as a people they are probably extinct. David had Moabite blood in his veins, Ruth 4: 17–22; as also had our Lord, who was the descendant of David.

Upon the mountain Nebo, the head of Pisgah. KITTO: "Nebo was originally the name of a Chaldean and Assyrian idol mentioned in Isai. 46: 1; Jer. 48: 1, and supposed to preside over learning and eloquence; hence described as the 'far-hearing,' 'he who instructs.' He corresponds with the Latin Mercury, the Greek Hermes, and the Thoth of the Egyptians." The name may have been applied to the mountain of the text, because of some sanctuary or high place in the neighborhood where the idol was worshipped.

From Num. 33: 47 it is evident that Nebo was situated in a mountain range or group called Abarim. From Deut. 32: 49 we learn that it was a particular mountain of the group, that it was in the land of Moab, and that it was in view of Jericho. It is questioned whether we are to understand the Pisgah of the text as a proper name, designating the most commanding point of Nebo, or, as rendered in the margin of the Common Version and in some of the later Targums, as a word meaning *hill* or *peak*: but the former is probably the correct view. The situation of Nebo was known to Josephus, Eusebius, and Jerome; but subsequently, and until quite recently, it was utterly lost. To the traveller who views the mountains of Moab from the highlands of Palestine, they present the appearance of a cliff or wall, the

Jericho; and Jehovah caused him to see all the land:

upper line of which is almost horizontal: and those who reached the crest of this wall could find no eminence which commanded such a view as that which Moses obtained. In order to escape the difficulty, many scholars assumed that Moses was aided by a miracle. But quite recently, Mr. Tristram has rediscovered the lost Nebo. HACKETT: "This traveller ascended one of the ridges or 'brows' of the Abarim or Moab mountains, on the east of the Jordan, which, in its position, and the wide prospect which it commands, agrees remarkably with the Biblical account. It is about three miles southwest of Heshbân (Heshbon), and about a mile and a half due west of Maîn (Baal Meon). It overlooks the mouth of the Jordan, 'over against Jericho,' Deut. 34: 1, and the gentle slope of its sides may well answer to 'the field of Zophim,' Num. 23: 14. It is not an isolated peak, but one of 'a succession of bare turf-clad eminences, so linked together that the depressions between them were mere hollows rather than valleys.' It is 'the highest' of these; which differ, however, so little that Mr. Tristram thought it impossible 'to pitch upon the exact site of Pisgah with certainty.' TRISTRAM: "The altitude of the brow cannot be less than four thousand five hundred feet, so completely does it overlook the heights of Hebron and of Central Judæa. To the eastward, as we turned round, the ridge seemed gently to slope for two or three miles, when a few small ruin-clad *tells* or hillocks (*Heshbân*, *Maîn*, and others) broke the monotony of the outline; and then, sweeping forth, rolled, in one vast unbroken expanse, the goodly Belka, one boundless plain, stretching far into Arabia, till lost in the horizon, one waving ocean of grain and grass. As the eye turned southwards, towards the line of the ridge on which we were clustered, the peak of Jebel Shihân just stood out behind Jebel Attarûs, which opened to reveal to us the situation of Kerak, though not its walls. Beyond and behind these, sharply rose Mounts Hor and Seir, and the rosy granite peaks of Arabia faded away into the distance towards Akabah. Still turning westwards, in front of us, two or three lines of terraces reduced the height of the plateau as it descended to the Dead Sea, the western outline of which we could trace, in its full extent, from Usdem to Eshkhah. It lay like a long strip of molten metal, with the sun mirrored on its surface, waving and undulating on its further edge, unseen on its eastern limits, as though poured from some deep cavern beneath our feet. There, almost in the centre of the line, a break in the ridge and a green spot below marked Engedi, the nest once of the Kenite, now of the wild goat. The fortress of Masada, and the jagged Shukif rose above the mountain line, but still far below us, and lower, too, than the ridge of Hebron, which we could trace, as it lifted gradually from the southwest, as far as Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The buildings of Jerusalem we could not see, though all the familiar points in the neighborhood were at once identified. There was the Mount of Olives, with the church at its top, the gap in the hills leading up from Jericho, and the rounded heights of Benjamin on its other side. Still turning northward, the eye was riveted by the deep Ghôr, with the rich green islets of Ain Sultân and Ain Dûk, the twin oases, nestling as it were, under the wall of Quarantania. There, closer still beneath us, had Israel's last camp extended, in front of the green fringe which peeped forth from under the terraces in our foreground. The dark sinuous bed of Jordan, clearly defined near its mouth, was soon lost in dense haze. Then, looking over it, the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top, and further still, opened the plain of Esdraelon, a shoulder of Carmel, or some other intervening height, just showing to the right of Gerizim, while the faint and distant bluish haze beyond it told us that there was the sea, the utmost sea. It seemed as if but a whiff were needed to brush off the haze and reveal it clearly. Northwards, again, rose the distinct outline of unmistakable Tabor, aided by which we could identify Gilboa and Jebel Duhy. Snowy Hermon's top was mantled with cloud, and Lebanon's highest range must have been exactly shut behind it; but in front, due north of us, stretched in long line the dark forest of Ajlun, bold and undulating, with the deep sides of mountains, here and there whitened by cliffs, terminating in Mount Gilead behind Es Salt. To the north-east the vast Hauran stretched beyond, filling in the horizon line to the Belka, between which and the Hauran (Bashan) there seems to be no natural line of separation. The tall range of Jebel Hauran, behind Bozrah, is distinctly visible." An inspection of the tribal map of Palestine in connection with Deut. 34: 1–3, will at once show that Mr. Tristram's description covers precisely the territory upon which Moses is said to have gazed. HACKETT: "The difficulty in regard to the possibility of seeing so far has been exaggerated. An Oriental atmosphere, as compared with our own, has a transparency which is marvellous. Dr. Thomson, who has dwelt more than a quarter of a century amid the scenery of Lebanon, says that he can show 'many a Pisgah in Lebanon and Hermon, from which the view is far more extensive' than that on which the eye of Moses rested as he looked abroad from Nebo. We are to remember, too, that though the Hebrew lawgiver was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, we are expressly told that 'his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated,' Deut. 34: 7."

Jericho. The name probably means *place of fragrance*. FOULKES: "Almost every reed in these regions distills a sugary juice, and almost every herb breathes fragrance." The city was of great antiquity, situated in the plain traversed by the Jordan, and immediately opposite the place where the Israelites crossed the river, Josh. 3: 16. It had a king or chieftain, as did nearly all other Eastern

[2] Gilead unto Dan; and all Naphtali; and the land of Ephra-

towns, Josh. 12 : 9–24, and seems also to have governed a small space of adjacent territory, Josh. 4 : 19. It was strongly walled, Josh. 2 : 15; 5 : 5. It was exceedingly rich, Josh. 6 : 19, 21; 7 : 21. It appears to have had commerce with distant cities, Josh. 7 : 21. It is memorable for the adventure of the spies, Josh. 2 : 1–21, and as the residence of Rahab, who through faith became the ancestress of our Lord, Josh. 6 : 25; 1 Chron. 2 : 10; Matt. 1 : 3; Heb. 11 : 31. It was utterly destroyed by Joshua; and a fearful curse was pronounced on him who should rebuild it, Josh. 6 : 24, 26. Its ruins were allotted to the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. 18 : 21. Hiel, the Bethelite, undertook its restoration, and received for his disobedience the curse of Joshua to the full, 1 K. 16 : 34; but when once rebuilt, the city rose slowly into importance. Near it Solomon had a foundry, 2 Chron. 6 : 17. In its vicinity "the sons of the prophets" had their residence, 2 K. 2 : 5, forming, perhaps, a school of sacred learning. From a place over against it, beyond Jordan, Elijah was translated, 2 K. 2 : 1–22. It was the scene of one of Elisha's first miracles, 2 K. 2 : 19–22; and near it he performed others, 2 K. 2 : 14; 6 : 1–7. In its plains Zedekiah was captured, 2 K. 25 : 5; Jer. 39 : 5. It suffered, in common with all Palestine, during the Babylonish captivity; but at the restoration appears to have arisen to importance, Ezra 3 : 34; Neh. 7 : 36; 3 : 2. Under Herod the Great, who at last died there, it was exceedingly prosperous; and the valley around it, naturally one of the most fertile in the world, was laden with the productions of agriculture. It was in a most flourishing condition in the days of our Lord, who located one of his most interesting parables on the road between it and Jerusalem, Luke 10 : 29–37, and who visited it, Luke 19 : 1–10, performing some of his most striking miracles in or near it, Matt. 20 : 30; Mark 10 : 46; Luke 18 : 35. On the rocky height which overhangs it, tradition locates his fast and his first temptation, Matt. 4 : 1–4; and near it, in the Jordan, his baptism, Matt. 3 : 13–17. It was destroyed in the last Jewish war. A new Jericho was subsequently built near the ruins of the old. Its subsequent history is involved in obscurity. It is now a desolation. A mile and a half distant from the ruins of the ancient cities there is a small, poor, and filthy hamlet, which bears the name of Riha, the Arabic name of Jericho; it is the only representative of the once flourishing city. The summer climate of the neighborhood is exceedingly hot, owing to the deep depression of the Jordan valley and to the glare of sunlight from the white cliffs which shut in the plain. The exhalations from the Dead Sea and the numerous salt springs in the vicinity, are unpleasant. When winter snow lies on the mountains of Judea, the people of Jericho are wearing light clothing. The climate is quite tropical.

Caused him to see. No miracle was wrought; see the note on Nebo and Pisgah. Jehovah directed his attention to the extensive prospect, and assured him that the country which he overlooked, was the good land promised to his people.

All the land. In its broader outlines. Its boundaries were the south country, the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean, the mountains of Lebanon, the river Jordan, and the rich belt of agricultural and pastoral land east of it, all of which Mr. TRISTRAM saw from the same position.

2. **Gilead.** The mountainous region east of the Jordan, extending some sixty miles from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Galilee, bounded on the east by the Arabian plateau, and having an average breadth of about twenty miles. It was the country of Sihon and Og, Josh. 12 : 2, 5; and was afterwards given to the two tribes and a half, Deut. 3 : 12, 13; comp. Josh. 17 : 1. It was celebrated for its production of balsam, Jer. 8 : 22; 46 : 11, and cattle, Num. 32 : 1. Under the dominion of the Israelites it was distinguished for the bold and somewhat lawless chivalry of its chieftains and warriors; and, hence, became a refuge for those who were imperilled on the other side of the Jordan, Judg. 11 : 1; 2 Sam. 2 : 8, 9; 17 : 22, 24. Elijah was a Gileadite, 1 K. 17 : 1. It is now occupied by fierce and semi-barbarous Arabs. PORTER: "In passing through the country one can hardly get over the impression that he is roaming through an English park. The graceful hills, the rich vales, the luxuriant herbage, the bright wild flowers, the plantations of evergreen oak, pine, arbutus; now a tangled thicket and now a grove scattered over the gentle slope, as if intended to reveal its beauty; the little rivulets fringed with oleanders, at one place running lazily between alluvial banks, at another, dashing madly down rocky ravines; such are the features of the mountains of Gilead."

Unto Dan. Some unknown city in the north of Gilead; not the Dan of Judg. 18 : 27, which was not in this district.

Naphtali. Described in Josh. 19 : 32–39. It was situated in the extreme north of Palestine, embracing the garden land of the country, Deut. 33 : 23, from the Lake of Galilee to the southern slopes of Lebanon. It was characterized by a greater variety of soil, climate, and scenery, than any other of the tribal territories. Asher lay between it and the Mediterranean Ocean. After the Babylonish captivity, its southern section, on the western shore of Galilee, was densely populated, and finally became the scene of our Lord's chief labors, embracing Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, where most of his mighty works were done.

The land of Ephraim and Manasseh. Two great districts lying side by side in the very heart of Palestine, extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. They were given to the children

im and Manasseh; and all the land of Judah, unto the
3 hinder sea; and the south country; and the circle of the
plain of Jericho, city of the palm-trees, unto Zoar.
4 And Jehovah said to him: This is the land which I
swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying: To thy
seed will I give it. I have caused thee to see it with thine
eyes, but thou shalt not pass over thither.
5 And there died Moses the servant of Jehovah in the
6 land of Moab, at the mouth of Jehovah. And he buried

of Joseph in fulfilment of prophecy, Gen. 49 : 22-26; Deut. 33 : 16. In the days of our Saviour, these territories constituted the middle portion of the holy land, called Samaria.

All the land of Judah. This was the largest of all the tribal territories, as Judah was the largest tribe. It occupied the extreme south of Palestine, and included nearly one-third of the whole country. It is full of wild and rugged scenery; and though much of it is now sterile, it would be fertile, if properly irrigated. Its southern slopes were specially adapted to the culture of the grape, Gen. 49 : 11.

The hinder sea. The Mediterranean; called the hinder sea, because it was on the west of Palestine; and the east was usually considered by the Hebrews to be before a man, and the west behind. See on Ex. 8 : 1.

3. **The south country.** The original is a technical geographical term, referring to the country immediately south of Palestine, and west of the Dead Sea and the Arabah, the borderland between the possessions of Judah and the wilderness beyond. As a geographical term, it is almost ignored in the Common Version, where it is usually supposed to designate a point of the compass, rather than a district of country. Hence great difficulties have arisen in the interpretation of such passages as Num. 13 : 17, 22; 21 : 2; Josh. 10 : 40, 41. The district was included in the possessions of Israel under David and Solomon. It was once very fertile, and sustained a considerable commerce. The terraces and walls of vineyards, the remains of large towns, and the routes of ancient caravans, have been recently found in it.

The circle of the plain. Behind Jericho the mountains recede from the Jordan, so that the plain is bounded on the west by a curve of eminences.

City of the palm-trees. So called from the abundance of the date palms which flourished in its tropical climate. See on Ex. 15 : 27.

Zoar. A city probably near the southern end of the Dead Sea. The exact locality has not been determined. It was one of the "cities of the plain," Gen. 13 : 10. Its original name was Bela, Gen. 14 : 2, 8. It was spared, at the intercession of Lot, from the destruction which overtook Sodom and Gomorrah. It was afterwards reckoned as one of the cities of Moab, Isai. 15 : 5; Jer. 48 : 34.

The eye of Moses first surveyed the territory east of the Jordan, then descended from the extreme north of Palestine to the southern territory of Judah, noting the most conspicuous features of the country, glanced over at the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, turned to view the extreme south, and finally rested on the plain of Jericho immediately before him.

4. **Thou shalt not pass over.** See, for the reason, on Num. 20 : 7-13. See also Num. 27 : 12-14; Deut. 1 : 37. It seems from Deut. 3 : 23-28 that Moses made earnest entreaties to be permitted to cross into the promised land, but was denied. God does not always answer our prayers in their letter; he often gives far better things than we ask, as he gave Moses entrance into that paradise of which Canaan was but a faint foreshadowing.

5. **There died.** The statement is explicit that Moses died; the idea that he was translated is a mere fancy.

At the mouth of Jehovah. In fulfilment and in consequence of the divine decree, and not because his vital powers had failed, ver. 7.

6. **He buried him.** The word *he* can refer only to Jehovah. The burial was an act of God, perhaps performed by the agency of angels. The rites of sepulture were thus performed by God, in the absence of the Israelites, that the grave might be unknown, and hence unworshipped by a nation ever prone to idolatry. It was possibly at the burial that the curious interview of Michael and Satan took place, Jude 9; the latter desiring the body, that he might make it a temptation to the chosen people.

him in the ravine in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, and no man knows his grave unto this day.

7 And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, and his freshness had not fled.

8 And the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the desert-plains of Moab thirty days, and the days of weeping in mourning for Moses were complete.

9 And Joshua, son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands on him: and the sons of Israel hearkened to him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses.

10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like
11 Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, in respect of all

In the ravine....over against Beth-peor. Beth-peor is the name of a town; it means the *house of Peor*, that is, the temple of *Baal-peor*, a Moabite god, Num. 23: 28; 25: 3-5; 31: 16, whose worship was probably specially celebrated in the place. "The town was situated on or near Mount Peor," says PORTER, "and close to the valley where the Israelites encamped immediately before descending into the plain of the Jordan, Deut. 3: 20. It was in this valley, apparently the modern Wady Heshân, that Moses was buried. With this agree the notices of Eusebius and Jerome, who state that Beth-peor lay six miles above Livias, on the road to Heshbon. The valley of Heshbon has never been fully explored. Whatever traveller may succeed in doing so will be rewarded by the discovery of the ruins of Beth-peor, and the closest approximation that has yet been made to the place of Moses' sepulture." It was in the possession of the tribe of Reuben, Josh. 13: 20.

No man knows his grave. Because it was made by God in the absence of human witnesses: such is the evident meaning of the whole narrative.

The statement that the resurrection of Moses took place soon after his burial is entirely destitute of support. His appearance with Elijah at the Transfiguration only proves that the redeemed soul has a conscious and glorious existence while awaiting its reunion with the body at the last day.

7. **A hundred and twenty.** The life of Moses was divided into three almost equal periods; forty years were spent in the court of Egypt; forty in exile with the Midianites; and forty as the leader of his own people in the wilderness, Acts 7: 23, 30.

8. **Wept.** The mourning of the Hebrews for the dead was characterized by studied publicity, Gen. 23: 2; Job 1: 20; 2: 8, 12, 13; Isai. 15: 3; Jer. 3: 21; 1 Sam. 11: 4, and a careful regard for the prescribed ceremonies. The sorrow of the bereaved was expressed not only by loud wailing, but by beating the breast, by sad-colored garments, by songs of lamentation, and by the employment of professional mourners.

Thirty days. See Num. 20: 29. This was probably the longest period of strictly Hebrew mourning. The seventy days of lamentation for Jacob, Gen. 50: 3, probably included the forty days occupied in the process of embalmment.

9. **Joshua.** See on Ex. 17: 9.

The spirit of wisdom. The original word rendered *wisdom*, as employed in the Old Testament, means neither mere shrewdness nor mere piety, but that union of both which makes a man successful in practical affairs, under the blessing of God, whose laws he obeys.

Laid his hands. See Num. 27: 18-23. This was not a meaningless ceremony, but an action performed in accordance with a special communication from God, who, in concurrence with the symbol, imparted to Joshua such peculiar gifts as he needed, in addition to his rare natural endowments. The laying on of hands was a significant ceremony in which the Hebrews were accustomed to pray for the gift or the transference of a spiritual quality, whether evil, Lev. 16: 21, or good, Gen. 48: 14; 2 K. 5: 11; Matt. 19: 13; Mark 8: 23; 10: 16; 16: 18; Acts 9: 17; 28: 8; Heb. 6: 1, 2.

10-12. **There arose not a prophet...like Moses.** These words were appended by a later in-

the signs and the wonders which Jehovah sent him to do
in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants,
12 and to all his land; and in respect of all the strong hand,
and in respect of all the great deeds of terror which
Moses did in the eyes of all Israel.

REVIEW LESSON XXVI.—MERCIES RECEIVED. DEUT. CHAP. 8.

1 ALL the commandments which I command thee this day,
shall ye observe to do, in order that ye may live, and

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spired writer, who probably also added the whole chapter to the book of Deuteronomy as Moses left it. It is impossible to determine when or by whom the addition was made; nor is it necessary, as the inspiration and divine authority of the whole book rest on grounds unaffected by such considerations; comp. Matt. 4:4, and Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:7, and Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:10, and Deut. 6:13; 10:20. The closing verses of Deuteronomy constitute the most sublime eulogy ever pronounced upon a man; he who esteemed the reproach of Christ better than the riches of Egypt, attained not only heavenly immortality, but an earthly fame such as the sinner may desire but can never attain. God's servant is always richly rewarded.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. God is so kind to his people that he often grants them not only what they need, but those things, if they be harmless, which they desire as mere gratifications. It was not necessary to the well-being of Moses, either here or hereafter, that he should see the promised land; nevertheless Jehovah himself displayed it to him with the most tender words, vers. 1–4.

2. We must all die, ver. 5.

3. How calmly Moses faced death, vers. 1–6. With what reasonable calmness the Christian may approach the last hour. If others die calmly, it is with the unreasoning calmness of sin and stupidity.

4. God cares tenderly for the bodies of his saints; for there is to be a resurrection in which the body, made spiritual and glorious, shall be united with the soul, ver. 6.

5. The soul of the Christian is kept, between death and the resurrection, in a state of unspeakable bliss and glory; on ver. 6, last paragraph.

6. Our prayers are sometimes denied, and better things than those for which we plead are granted in their stead; on ver. 4.

7. It is right to mourn for the great and good; ver. 8. Yet we should not sorrow as those who have no hope, 1 Thess. 4:13.

8. When a new era comes, new men, with wisdom adequate to its emergencies, arise with it, ver. 9. Let us, therefore, be sure, when great men fall, that God will raise up others in their stead.

9. We should seek the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may perform the duties of life with wisdom, ver. 9.

10. The splendid rewards of those who forsake the world for the service of God, vers. 10–13. Let no one fear to abandon all things in order to be a follower of Christ.

11. Ministers of God, whom he appoints to lead and teach his people, have special protection and honor, vers. 10–13.

The teacher will find in the present chapter references to the principal events considered in the foregoing lessons; and it may therefore be used advantageously as the basis of a general review. It also supplies much valuable instruction not immediately connected with its historical allusions; for the writer not only utters exhortations in view of mercies received, but warnings against the deadly influence of the temporal prosperity upon which the chosen people were about to enter.

1. **Shall ye observe....in order that ye may live.** These words constitute the keynote of the chapter: obedience is rewarded with every earthly blessing; transgression leads to many sorrows. The lesson was illustrated and verified in all the subsequent history of the Israelites: when they sought God he gave them riches and dominion; when they turned from him he delivered them to their foes.

multiply, and come in, and possess the land which Jehovah
2 swore to your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the
way which Jehovah thy God has caused thee to go these
forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble thee,
to prove thee, to know what is in thy heart, whether
3 thou wilt keep his commandments, or not. And he hum-
bled thee, and caused thee to hunger, and gave thee the
manna to eat, which thou knewest not, and thy fathers knew
not, that he might make thee know that not on bread
alone does man live, but on every word which comes
4 out of the mouth of Jehovah, does man live. Thy gar-

It is still true for us as it was for them, Matt. 19 : 29; 1 Tim. 4 : 8; but to us the rewards and punishments of eternity are so clearly revealed that we sometimes almost forget those of time.

Multiply....and possess the land. There were not enough Israelites at the time to possess it all; Deut. 7 : 22; Ex. 23 : 29, 30.

2. **Thou shalt remember, etc.** In our days of prosperity, it is well to remember the days of adversity which we have known, not in order to dim the happiness of our hearts, but in order to keep ourselves from pride, and to cultivate that spirit of humble thankfulness without which no joy is perfect.

To humble thee. Our trials are often for the same purpose. Our disposition to glory in our own abilities and achievements is so deep-seated that God in mercy rebukes and uproots it.

To know what is in thy heart. These words are accommodated to our modes of thought. God knows our hearts; but we ourselves are ignorant of their capacity for evil; and trials which call forth the sinfulness of our inmost nature and display it before our startled eyes, that we may be driven to God for pardon and strength, are always merciful in their design, and often fortunate in their results. If we were wholly sheltered from such adversities, we might go to the judgment bar of Christ dreaming that we are saints, to find ourselves, when it is too late, the very chief of sinners.

3. **He humbled thee.** The design was accomplished. The many judgments of the wilderness, and the final ban condemning a whole generation to die in its wastes, were the means of inculcating a less boastful and riotous, and a more obedient spirit. See on Num. 21 : 7.

Caused thee to hunger. Ex. 16 : 1-5; Num. 21 : 5.

Manna. Ex. 16 : 1-35.

Which thou knewest not. Its properties were essentially different from those of the ordinary vegetable manna, though its external appearance was similar. See on Ex. 16 : 31.

On bread. Bread is mentioned as an example of all the productions of nature, which we are prone to consider as the results of ordinary laws and forces, rather than as gifts of heaven, and as so necessary to our existence that we are temped to forsake God in order to secure them. He sought to teach the Israelites that all the gifts of Providence are his to withhold or to bestow, and that worldly possessions are not essential to the happiness of those who seek his blessing. T. E. ESPIN: "The ordinary means of sustenance were withheld, and new ones, by God's almighty word and will substituted. Thus was the lesson taught that it is not nature which nourishes man, but God the Creator by and through nature; and generally that God is not tied to the particular channels through which he is ordinarily pleased to work."

On every word. Amidst abundance his word can reduce us to poverty; in poverty it can sustain us. Our sustenance is from his word, whether it come to us in the ordinary course of events, or by special providences.

The lesson of this verse, which it was so hard for Israel to learn, our Redeemer remembered during the terrible fast of the wilderness, Matt. 4 : 1-4; and hence he resisted greater temptations than those to which Israel yielded. Let us bear it in mind when we are in poverty and distress.

4. **Thy garment decayed not off from thee.** See Deut. 29 : 5. Not only were the Israelites fed, though far from sufficient natural means of sustenance, but they were also clothed. No miracle in reference to raiment is asserted, and hence none is to be supposed. Special providences made it unnecessary for the desert wanderer to wear his garments until they were tattered. See the essay on the sustenance of Israel in the wilderness, connected with Lesson IX.

ment decayed not off from thee, and thy foot swelled not
5 these forty years. And thou shalt know in thy heart,
that, as a man chastens his son, Jehovah thy God chastens
6 thee. And thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah
thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.
7 For Jehovah thy God is bringing thee into a good land,
a land of brooks of water, of springs and depths that
8 come forth in the plain and on the mountain ; a land of

V. 4. *Or*, thy foot became not callous.

Thy foot swelled not. It was not injured by the toils and impediments of the way, being sufficiently protected by sandals.

5. **Thou shalt know in thy heart.** Not as a theory, but as a heart-felt experience. This was the design of the trials and mercies of the wilderness. The mercies interpreted the trials as having come from a father's love.

As a man chastens his son. For his good. There is a difference between mere punishment and chastisement. The former may be administered in a spirit of pure justice or even of revenge; the latter is administered with the design of making him who receives it more chaste in heart and life.

Thy God chastens thee. God is a father; and if he sends us trial it is in a spirit of parental love and faithfulness. All the sufferings of this life are chastisements, since they are designed to make us better. We often turn them into mere punishments, because we do not permit them to exercise a chastening influence. After this life, those who are lost shall meet with punishment rather than chastisement.

6. **Thou shall keep the commandments.** The design of God's chastisements is still further stated.

7 **For.** The reason for God's anxiety to teach the Israelites the lesson of humble dependence and obedience is now to be stated. In brief, it is this : He was about to fulfil his promises by leading them into a most productive land and into circumstances of great prosperity. But when they left Egypt they were in such an irreligious condition that the sudden reverse of their circumstances would have spoiled them ; they would have but added one more to the heathen nations of the world. It was therefore first necessary to chasten them, that the possession of the promised land might not prove their ruin. Adversity is often the best preparation for prosperity.

Is bringing. The event was about to take place.

A good land. The gorgeous description which follows was no poetic exaggeration. Palestine is desolate now ; but we know, not only from the Scriptures, but from profane history, that it once supported a very dense population, which it could not have done had it not been exceedingly well-watered and productive. See on Ex. 3 : 8.

We must not judge the natural resources of the country by contrast with those of our own land ; rather, if we would occupy the stand-point of Moses and his people, we must contrast them with those of Egypt and the desert, the only countries with which the Israelites were acquainted, Deut. 11 : 10. Egypt was distinguished for monotony ; Palestine for variety of climate and scenery : the former was a level expanse of green ; the latter a park of mountain, hill and vale, of forest and meadow : the former had but one river ; the latter had a thousand brooks and springs : the former had almost no rain ; the latter was blessed with abundance : the former was irrigated with difficulty ; the latter with ease.

It is observed that the book of Deuteronomy abounds more than the earlier books with praises of the promised land. Dean GRAVES : " Such a topic at an earlier period would have increased the murmurings and impatience of the people at being detained in the wilderness : whereas now, it encouraged them to encounter with more cheerfulness the opposition they must meet with from the inhabitants of Canaan."

8. **Vines.** These were but little cultivated in Egypt, as the overflow of the Nile occurs near the season of ripening grapes. But the abundance of wine in Syria and Palestine is celebrated on the Egyptian monuments which record the campaigns of Thotmes III. The vineyards of Palestine

wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegran-
9 ates; a land of oil olives and honey; a land wherein thou
shalt eat bread without scarceness,—thou shalt not lack
anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of
10 whose mountains thou shalt hew copper. And thou shalt
eat and be satisfied, and bless Jehovah thy God for the
good land which he has given thee.
11 Take heed to thyself lest thou forget Jehovah thy God,
so as not to keep his commandments, and his judgments,
12 and his statutes, which I command thee this day; lest
thou eat and be satisfied; and build good houses and
13 dwell in them; and thy herd and thy flock multiply; and
silver and gold multiply for thee; and all which thou hast
14 multiply; and thy heart be lifted up; and thou forget
Jehovah thy God who brought thee forth out of the land
15 of Egypt, out of the house of servants; who has led thee
through the great and fearful wilderness, [through] fiery
serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no
water; who brought forth water for thee out of the rock

have faded away under the Mohammedan government, as the Koran discourages the production of wine.

9. **Iron....copper.** Remains of ancient iron and copper works are found on Lebanon, in the district of Argob in Bashan, and in many other parts of the country.

10. **Thou shalt....bless Jehovah.** These words are not designed as a prediction, but as a statement of Israel's duty.

14. **Thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah.** There are great dangers in prosperity, Matt. 19 : 23, 24; Mark 10 : 25; Luke 18 : 25. The poor, whose poverty directs them to God, are more fortunate than they know.

Who brought thee forth. These words suggest all the earlier lessons of the present series. The writer resumes his exhortations based upon the mercies of God in the past.

15. **Who has led thee.** The wilderness journey had terminated; Israel was resting in a land of plenty, though he had not yet crossed the Jordan.

The great and fearful wilderness. See the essay on the Wilderness of the Wanderings, connected with Lesson XXI.

Fiery serpents. See on Num. 21 : 4-9.

Scorpions. These are still common in the wilderness through which the Israelites passed. EHRENBERG enumerates five species which are found near Mount Sinai. They occur, indeed, throughout the East, usually in dry and dark places, under stones and among ruins. Rev. Wm. HOUGHTON: "They are carnivorous in their habits, and move along in a threatening attitude, with the tail elevated. The sting, which is situated at the extremity of the tail, has at its base a gland that secretes a poisonous fluid, which is discharged into the wound by two minute orifices at its extremity. In hot climates the sting often occasions much suffering, and sometimes alarming symptoms." Scorpions are referred to twice in the Old Testament, here and at Ezek. 2 : 6; and five times in the New, Luke 10 : 19; 11 : 12; Rev. 9 : 3, 5, 10.

No water. Ex. 15 : 22-27; Num. 20 : 7-13; 21 : 4, 5.

Out of the rock of flint. It is not necessary to conclude that the rock in Horeb, Ex. 17 : 1-7, or in Meribah-Kadesh, Num. 20 : 7-13, was actually flint, though it may have been such. The word

16 of flint; who gave thee manna to eat in the wilderness,
which thy fathers knew not, in order to humble thee, and
17 in order to prove thee, to do thee good afterward;—and
thou say in thy heart: My power, and the strength of
18 my hand has gotten for me this wealth. But thou shalt
remember Jehovah thy God; for he it is who gives thee
power to get wealth, in order to establish his covenant
19 which he swore to thy fathers, as it is this day. And it
shall be, if thou at all forget Jehovah thy God and go
after other gods, and serve them, and bow down to them,
I testify against you this day, that ye shall utterly perish.

flint is more probably a poetical description of the rock with reference to its hardness, and the consequent improbability that it would yield water.

16. **To do thee good, afterward.** By cultivating in thee a disposition of humble obedience, such as will render it more safe for me to confer upon thee the promised land. Such is always God's design in sending afflictions, 2 Cor. 4 : 16–18; Heb. 12 : 4–11. The wilderness represents the crosses of the Christian life, and Canaan the crown which will be given to such as forget not God by the way.

17. **And thou say in thy heart.** The writer here resumes his warnings against the deceitful and deadly influences of prosperity. For the connection with that which immediately precedes, see on ver. 7.

My power. We are prone to attribute our prosperity to our own ingenuity, rather than to the blessing of God; thus we grow vain-glorious, and depend upon ourselves, rather than upon the Giver of all good, Dan. 4 : 28–33. See also the references on ver. 14, first paragraph.

18. **Thou shalt remember.** Not a prediction, but a statement of duty.

Who gives thee power to get wealth. But for the blessing of God we should not be able to acquire anything; even wicked men are dependent upon it, Matt. 5 : 45.

In order to establish his covenant. There were other reasons, such as those which induced Jehovah to make the covenant in the first instance; but his regard for his word to the patriarchs was one of his chief motives in blessing their posterity. It is mentioned here that the Israelites might not fall into self-righteousness, and fancy that they were prospered for their own merits.

As it is this day. As it exists, unbroken by the lapse of generations and the sins of the people. They were reminded for their comfort, that though so long a period had passed since it was made, and though they had so often rebelled, it was yet in force.

19. **Ye shall utterly perish.** As an independent nation. The prediction was fulfilled: as often as the people became idolatrous their armies were conquered, their land was overrun, and they were carried away captive. In a more terrible sense, those who forget God shall perish forever.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. We should endeavor to keep all the commandments of God, ver. 1.
2. The temporal rewards of obedience; on ver. 1.
3. The far greater eternal rewards; on ver. 1.
4. When adversity is past, we should remember it in order to derive from it that instruction which it is adapted to convey; on ver. 2, first paragraph.
5. Trials should teach us humility; on ver. 2, second paragraph.
6. They should assist us to learn the evil of our hearts; on ver. 2, third paragraph.
7. No one lives on the productions of nature, except as these are provided and blessed by the immediate love of the Creator; and when, therefore, we seek them at the cost of God's smile, we forfeit all that can render them valuable; on ver. 3.
8. If the path of duty seems to lead us away from the blessing of riches, let us be confident that God will supply all our wants; on ver. 3.

20 As the nations which Jehovah destroys before you, so shall ye perish, because ye will not hearken to the voice of Jehovah your God.

9. Let us be thankful that Jesus resisted for us a temptation to which we are very prone to yield; on ver. 3, last paragraph.

10. Such is our perversity that we can only be taught the Fatherhood of God by mingled chastisements and mercies; on ver. 5, first paragraph.

11. Trial is punishment if we abuse it, chastisement if we accept its gracious teachings; on ver. 5, third paragraph.

12. If we readily learn the lessons of chastisement, God can perhaps safely entrust us with prosperity; on ver. 7, first paragraph.

13. The delights of the promised land, as contrasted with the hardships of the desert, are symbols of heavenly felicity after the miseries of this present evil world, vers. 7-10. God disciplines us here that he may prepare us for the enjoyments of his presence hereafter; first the cross, then the crown; on ver. 16.

14. Prosperity should lead us to bless God, ver. 10; but it too often leads us to forget him and rely upon our own powers, boasting of what we have achieved; on vers. 14, 16.

15. The poor, who are taught by poverty to depend upon God and obey his laws, are more fortunate than the rich who are taught by their abundance to forget him who bestowed it; on ver. 14, first paragraph.

16. All our ability to acquire wealth is from God; on ver. 18, second paragraph.

17. The perpetuity of God's promises; on ver. 18, second and third paragraphs.

18. The terrible fate in eternity of those who forget God, vers. 19, 20.